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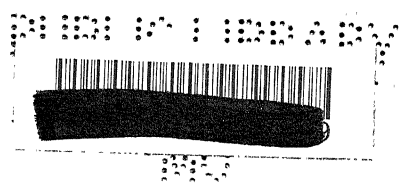
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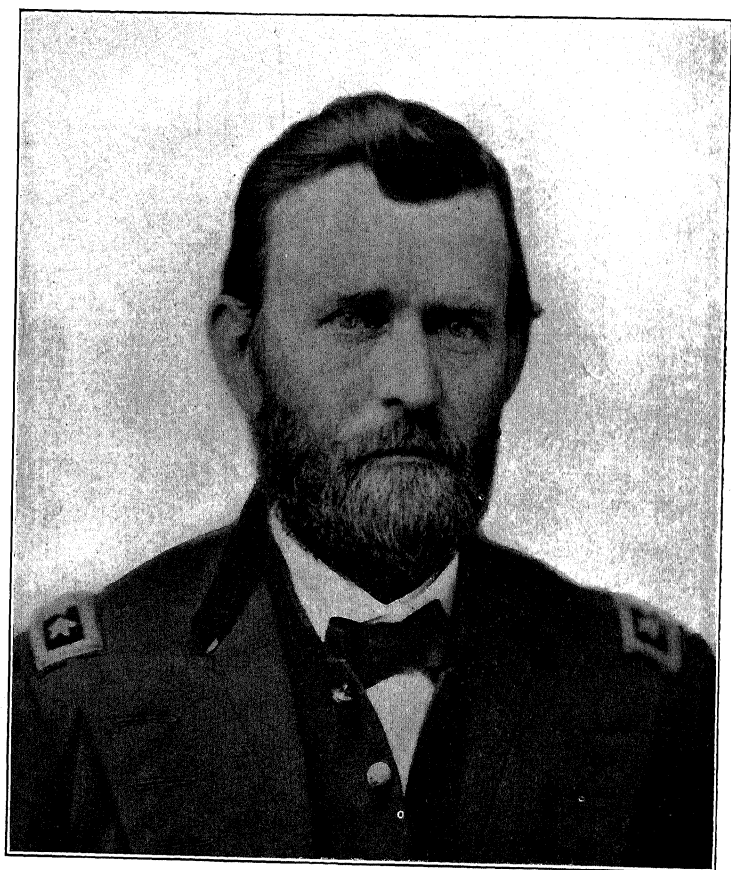
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**ULYSSES S. GRANT**







*W. A. Grant*

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# ULYSSES S. GRANT

*The Great Soldier of America*

by

ROBERT R. McCORMICK



D. APPLETON-CENTURY COMPANY  
INCORPORATED  
NEW YORK LONDON

1934

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TO  
GENERAL CHARLES P. SUMMERALL  
WHOSE QUIET MODESTY IN PEACE AND  
IRON DETERMINATION IN WAR MADE CLEAR  
TO ME THE CHARACTER OF GENERAL GRANT  
THIS HISTORY  
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

THE leisure hours of a quarter of a century largely spent in reading the history of wars, of the campaigns of great generals, of famous battles, have impressed upon me the honor due, but grudgingly withheld from, General Grant for his triumphs, compared to the glory lavished on other victors in measure of their success.

This injustice to his memory is due in part to unconscious political sentiment, but also to malicious and deliberate design.

The Civil War in America has provoked many emotions, but the partizans may be grouped generally into two camps: in one, the people whose sympathy, traditions, and instinct guide them toward everything that may be construed as democratic, liberal, and idealistic; in the other, those whose hopes and feelings exalt whatever points toward royalist and aristocratic conceptions of life.

For the liberals, the figure of Lincoln fills the entire horizon. This man, about whom more books have been written than any other except Christ, has blanketed all his democratic contemporaries—literary, political, and military.

Overshadowed as a democratic hero, Grant had little to offer to the aristocrats, and that little he withheld. He was the son of a poor farmer and tanner, sent to the Military Academy to obtain a free education, disliking the company in which his humble station set him at disadvantage among the more favored cadets; planning for a while the peaceful career of professor; emerging for a few months of youthful splendor in the Mexican battles—a splendor dimmed by a lame and inadequate recognition by his military superiors; given the most undesirable post-war details; compelled to resign his commission for an indiscretion; after eight years of ill-success in private life he was refused employment at the outbreak of the Civil War by General McClellan and by the adjutant-general of the army, was given a political commission by the Governor of his state, became a brigadier-general as a matter of political patronage, and eventually commander-in-chief of all the armies, not by wish of the military authorities, not even at the desire of

the President-Commander-in-Chief, but in pursuance of an act of Congress introduced by his political sponsor!

In carriage and in dress he affronted all military codes. James Ford Rhodes, who should have known better, said of him: "He lacked the external manners, the aloofness of person, the quality of being niggard of his time, the dignity of bearing that should go with the commander of over half a million soldiers to whom the nation looked for its salvation."<sup>1</sup>

He offended the officers of all armies during his voyage around the world by refusing to review their troops, and he deliberately insulted the entire military profession of Germany, the nation which commanded military thought for half a century, by saying to the Crown Prince: "The truth is I am more of a farmer than a soldier. I take little or no interest in military affairs. I never went into the army without regret and I never retired without pleasure."<sup>2</sup>

If such a man should be accepted as great, all the structure of ancestry and of professionalism, as well as the outward manifestations of bearing, stride, speech, and tinsel with which traditional militarism has built up and maintained its ascendancy, would collapse. The pretensions of this upstart must be cradle-killed, and whatever laurels must be conceded to champions in this war among republicans awarded to a more conventional soldier.

Such a one was easily found. Robert E. Lee, the son of General "Lighthorse Harry" Lee—Revolutionary hero, member of the Virginia convention for the ratification of the Constitution, and favorite of General Washington—grandson-in-law of Mrs. Washington and owner of the fine estate of Arlington across the river from the Capitol, was born as nearly an aristocrat as is possible to an American. His military antecedents also left nothing to be desired. Graduated from West Point, second in his class, he was commissioned in the engineer corps, an organization which at that time performed many of the functions, and enjoyed a large part of the reputation, of the present-day general staff. As General Scott's principal staff-officer he had an exalted part in preparing the plans for that general's victories. He remained in the army continuously until after the secession of Virginia which he opposed with all his influence; was offered, and declined, command of the

<sup>1</sup> James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States*, IV, 437-38.

<sup>2</sup> Louis A. Coolidge, *Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 535.

armies of the Union; resigned his commission and took up arms in defense of his state, as he considered that his father had done before him.

For two years he marched from sensational victory to sensational victory and resisted until further effort was hopeless. In defeat and poverty his life was as dignified as in victory it had been unostentatious. He received no material rewards to excite envy; on the contrary, he was kept in suspense of prosecution long after his comrades were pardoned. To loyalty and admiration was added sympathy. No rival, military or political, competed with him for the devotion of the Confederate soldiers. Every circumstance combined to give him in history the triumph that evaded him in life. In establishing the greatness of General Grant there is no need to detract from the fame of his great opponent.

Grant, on the other hand, enjoyed complete victory and all the rewards of victory—the full rank of general, the presidency twice. Like Cæsar, he could say “*Veni, vidi, vici.*”

He distanced the men he had raised up with him and the would-be rivals in his own army, many of whom in after years felt it necessary to emphasize their own importance at the expense of their leader.

Lord Wolseley, the leading English soldier of a day that put caste above victory and military ostentation above military virtue, visited Lee and, recognizing in him a man intellectually and culturally worthy to lead a cause which English aristocracy had made its own, became the first of an imposing line of soldiers and writers to exalt the leaders of the lost cause at the expense of their conquerors. Henderson and the other European critics are merely his pupils.<sup>3</sup>

A certain class of Americans has joined the foreign traducers of Grant. As colonials and as republicans, Americans were long excluded from association with cultured Europeans. When at length they were grudgingly admitted, it was as neophytes, required to accept the views of the elect. As such we find an active if undesirable part of our population, including a few military men, accepting and repeating without question European slanders of an American hero. John Cadman Ropes is their typical historian. Born a petty

<sup>3</sup> After these words were written and while my manuscript was in preparation, the two erudite volumes of the distinguished English general, J. F. C. Fuller, were published. It is obvious that my comments do not refer to them.

bourgeois in the aristocratic city of St. Petersburg, he devoted a life of effort to prove that the common American did not, and verily could not, produce a great general, the hereditary privilege of that aristocracy to which he did not belong but with which he wished to mingle on terms of inferiority.

It is time that we repudiate these servile Americans, time that we no longer allow an American general who in four years commanded forces ranging in size from one thousand to one million men, who was never defeated, who compelled the capitulation of ten fortresses, five armies, and eventually of the entire hostile government, to be relegated as inferior to the men he conquered, to his column-commanders, or to foreign generals whose achievements fell far below his own.

In war everything is shrouded in fog. Only results, such as the retention or capture of positions or, even more, of armies, are beyond contention. Different people, seeing different phases of a battle, present contrary testimony, and their evidence in turn is affected by their temperaments, their interest, and their prejudices. A designing historian, by judicious choosing and excluding, can muster what evidence he wants to prove anything except the result. On this loom may be woven his own wishful thinking, the judicious use of "ifs," intimating that all accidents fell in favor of the object of his malice and against the fortune of his hero, while black and white sheep may be introduced to take the blame of defeat from the favored one and steal the laurel from the brow of the victor.

All these tricks have been exhausted against General Grant, and, in addition, the old subterfuge of attributing the loss of battles and of the war to orders of his opponents gone astray and to the deaths in battle of their generals, while the same mishaps, when they occurred to him, are ignored.

I propose to expose all these tricks openly, and to prove that Grant's most criticized battle was more creditable to him than the most famous victories of two great generals whose careers have been reported by more favorable and more patriotic historians. It will be a just punishment to Grant's critics to point out that they evidence such lack of military qualities that they cannot even recognize them in the hero.

It was because Grant was a Republican that the hereditary soldiers and the soldiers laboring under the hereditary tradition have

maligned him. But it was precisely because he was a Republican, a conscientious and conforming soldier of the Republic, that he received his first two and his last two army commissions, survived the jealous attacks of his military superiors, outwitted his political rival, commanded the confidence of his men and his government, and won the war.

For there raged in the Union Army throughout the Civil War a contest between officers who had joined the army to give effect to their political convictions and those who had joined it through the West Point Military Academy for a permanent career and who were for the first time present in number and maturity to fill the higher ranks, for they had been youngsters in the Mexican War. The former backed their claims with political influence, and quoted the traditions of American armies—not always successful, to be sure; the latter countered with a clannish solidarity and a claim to military education which, sound enough, was pushed, as in the case of Halleck, to the degree of fraudulent mysticism.

These antagonisms between volunteer and regular soldiers were carried on with vindictiveness during the war, and revenge was taken for injuries long after its end. It was Grant's complete comprehension of both sides of this controversy, his political ability to be, if not all things to all men, at least a leader of volunteers to the volunteers and a West Pointer to the West Pointers, which enabled him to rise to command of the armies of the United States and suppress the rebellion.

R. R. McC.





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R. R. McC.



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ULYSSES S. GRANT









# ULYSSES S. GRANT

## CHAPTER I

### MEXICO

GENERAL GRANT was born in Ohio after that state had ceased to be a frontier, in an era possessing neither the romance of frontier life nor yet the advantages of a settled civilization, among very unsuitable surroundings, one would think, to produce the multitude of outstanding men it brought forth.

April 27,  
1822

I find nothing in his early life either interesting or significant. Like most American boys, he disliked his father's trade, and again like most of them, he shrank from the effort of education that would release him from it. To provide his son, as so many million American fathers have said, "with the advantages which had been denied myself," Jesse Grant pulled the wires to secure Hiram Ulysses an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

June 3,  
1839

Named Hiram Ulysses, he was registered at the Academy as "Ulysses S.," and in his abortive effort to get back his own name he learned to accept the immutability of army red tape. This error in registration gave him the initials "U. S." and inspired some classmates to dub him "Uncle Sam Grant." His career at the Academy was uninspiring. He never succeeded, in his own words, in getting squarely at either end of his class. He was not even one of the cadet officers.

A high scholastic standing is undoubtedly an indication of ability, but not an infallible one. Academic leadership probably indicates superior mental capacity, but it may also result from superior preliminary training, parental pres-

sure, mere vanity, parrot-like memory, or even the necessity of earning a scholarship not necessary to competing students.

There is a still greater incentive to high standing in the Military Academy than in other schools because the order of standing at graduation fixes the order of seniority in the years to come, with the consequences of pay in peace and opportunity in war.

Grant did not have any of these advantages or incentives, not even the last, as he did not intend to remain in the army after graduation. We know from his subsequent career that he learned the useful substance of his lessons without absorbing the unnecessary detail that gives high marks. He also subconsciously sized up all his fellow-students so well that he was able to take advantage of their weaknesses twenty years afterwards. Later, as a lieutenant, he learned more from the Mexican War than Napoleon's marshals acquired in a quarter-century of conflict.

Many of his biographers accentuate his horsemanship and his feat in taking a high jump at the commencement exercises. General James B. Fry describes it as follows:

When the regular service was completed, the class, still mounted, was formed in a line through the center of the hall. The riding-master placed the leaping-bar higher than a man's head and called out, "Cadet Grant!" A clean-faced, slender, blue-eyed young fellow, weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, dashed from the ranks on a powerfully built chestnut sorrel horse and galloped down the opposite side of the hall. As he turned at the farther end and came into the stretch across which the bar was placed, the horse increased his pace, and measuring his strides for the great leap before him, bounded into the air and cleared the bar, carrying his rider as if man and beast had been welded together. The spectators were speechless. "Very well done, sir!" growled old Hirshberger, the riding-master, and the class was dismissed and disappeared; but Cadet Grant remained a living image in my memory.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from William C. Church, *Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 16.

The story loses considerable emphasis today when both boys and girls are jumping as high every day. But Tod Sloan was not to invent the athletic seat for another sixty years, and Grant sat his horse as upright as the Crusaders had to sit in their armor. In a position that unbalanced the horse and racked the rider, Grant did by nerve and agility what riders easily do today by equitation.

With this appreciation we can understand that Grant was an athlete, a quality not indispensable in a general but one that would prove more than useful to a colonel of raw volunteers; and that he demonstrated there for the first time the fearlessness which, if not necessary to one who commands from far in the rear, is indispensable to one who dominates the battle-field as Grant was to do so often.

At West Point Grant developed a talent for sketching and even for painting, useful military accomplishments, but the only record we have that he made use of them reports him as correcting one map in the Mexican War. It may or may not explain his topographic faculty, unequalled by any other officer in the war.

After his graduation, but before his assignment to duty, Grant received one of the most important lessons of his cadet days, one that he was to relearn in the Mexican War and use to make himself general in command of all the armies of the United States. As he describes it in his *Memoirs*,

The conceit was knocked out of me by two little circumstances that happened soon after the arrival of the clothes, which gave me a distaste for military uniform that I never recovered from. Soon after the arrival of the suit I donned it, and put off for Cincinnati on horseback. While I was riding along a street of that city, imagining that every one was looking at me with a feeling akin to mine when I first saw General Scott, a little urchin, bareheaded, barefooted, who, with dirty and ragged pants held up by a single gallow—that's what suspenders were called then—and a shirt that had not seen a washtub for weeks, turned to me and cried; "Soldier! will you work? No, sir-ee; I'll sell my shirt first!!"

The other circumstance occurred at home. Opposite our house in Bethel stood the old stage-tavern where "man and beast" found accommodation. The stable-man was rather dissipated, but possessed of some humor. On my return I found him parading the streets and attending in the stable barefooted, but in a pair of sky-blue nan-keen pantaloons—just the color of my uniform trousers—with a strip of white-cotton sheeting sewed down the outside seams in imitation of mine. The joke was a huge one in the mind of many people, and was much enjoyed by them; but I did not appreciate it so highly.<sup>2</sup>

Grant was graduated from West Point in 1843, almost exactly three years before his first battle at Palo Alto, ample time in which to develop the school-boy into the leader. The first year spent at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, near St. Louis, the principal army post of the day, familiarized him with the routine and customs of the service. The next year at Camp Salubrity in western Louisiana gave him opportunity to learn all the military exercises taught in the army, to practise life in the open, and to develop his faculty for topography. Here he recovered from some threatening pulmonary symptoms.

Experience in water transportation was obtained in the journeys with his regiment from Louisiana on the Red and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, and later to Corpus Christi. Six months more of military training there was capped with the invaluable discipline of the overland march to Brownsville.

Untrained armies, if the phrase may be permitted, are no better than mobs. System, mutual acquaintance, discipline, and training improve the mass, rapidly at first, and then in a scale of diminishing returns. There is a moment when the organization is at its best, after which the unnatural celibate life and the lack of incentive to effort or of obvious reason for existence start a decay. The ideal period of military preparation is not agreed upon. The

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, I, 24.

training of Taylor's army must have approached this ideal. Grant says of it:

Gradually the "army of occupation" assembled at Corpus Christi. When it was all together it consisted of seven companies of the second regiment of dragoons, four companies of light artillery, five regiments of infantry,—the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eighth,—and one regiment of artillery acting as infantry—not more than three thousand men in all. General Zachary Taylor commanded the whole. There were troops enough in one body to establish a drill and discipline sufficient to fit men and officers for all they were capable of in case of battle. The rank and file were composed of men who had enlisted in time of peace to serve for seven dollars a month, and were necessarily inferior as material to the average volunteers enlisted later in the war expressly to fight, and also to the volunteers in the war for the preservation of the Union. The men engaged in the Mexican War were brave, and the officers of the regular army, from highest to lowest, were educated in their profession. A more efficient army for its number and armament I do not believe ever fought a battle than the one commanded by General Taylor in his first two engagements on Mexican—or Texan—soil.<sup>3</sup>

Sept.,  
1845

Grant was especially fortunate in serving these formative months and receiving his baptism of fire at Palo Alto under Captain George A. McCall, a soldier of exceptional merit, who was so highly regarded by General Taylor as to be one of the two captains chosen to command the reconnaissance at Resaca de la Palma the next day. This advanced Grant, so recently a supernumerary lieutenant, to the command of the company in that battle. He handled his men coolly and skilfully but, tied down by his duty to his troops, did not find any of the opportunities for great distinction that came to him in consequence of his transfer, so bitterly regretted, from company commander to regimental adjutant.

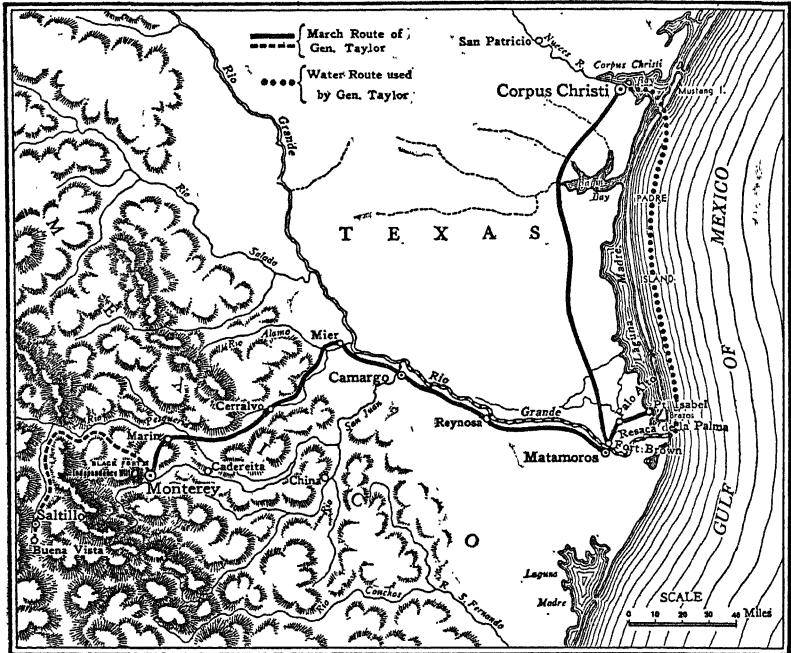
May 9,  
1846

When the army, having marched from Resaca de la Palma to Fort Brown and from there to Matamoras and

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 44.

Sept.  
20-24,  
1846

Camargo, turned from the Rio Grande and its river transport, it began to march across the mountains to attack Monterey. Up to this time the supply problem had been



GENERAL TAYLOR'S CAMPAIGN

simple, but the army transport wagons were totally inadequate and inappropriate for the overland march. It was necessary to hire Mexican muleteers, who were willing to conduct the invading army—for hire. The difficult task of organizing and disciplining these primitive men and their unbroken animals for the Fourth Infantry was imposed upon young Grant, who until shortly before had been a subordinate company officer.

The burden of this work did not discourage Grant; indeed, throughout his career only burdens imposed upon him could arouse him from his apparently normal lethargy to his enormous possibilities in expended effort. It was against



the implied removal from the fighting forces that he burst forth like the fire of a seemingly extinct volcano. For once his correspondence resembles Admiral Horatio Nelson's of the English navy, another fighter if not another thinker.

Grant wrote to his commanding officer:

I respectfully protest against being assigned to a duty which removes me from sharing in the dangers and honors of service with my company at the front, and respectfully ask to be permitted to resume my place in line. Respectfully submitted,

U. S. GRANT,  
*2d Lt. 4th Inft.*<sup>4</sup>

And again:

I should be permitted to resign the position of Quartermaster and Commissary. Why should I be required to resign my position in the Army in order to escape this duty? I MUST and WILL accompany my regiment in battle, and I am amenable to court-martial should any loss occur to the public property in my charge by reason of my absence while in action.<sup>5</sup>

The reply was velvet-gloved:

Lt. Grant is respectfully informed that his protest cannot be considered.

Lt. Grant was assigned to duty as Quartermaster and Commissary because of his observed ability, skill, and persistency in the line of duty. The commanding officer is confident that Lt. Grant can best serve his country in present emergencies under this assignment. Lt. Grant will continue to perform the assigned duties.<sup>6</sup>

In regiments officered by reserve or volunteer officers it is possible to appoint officers to duty for which previous civilian experience has fitted them, but the selection of Grant for this position from among young regular officers whose training had been practically identical is in itself evidence of his colonel's esteem, because if the failure of a single company is serious to the regiment, the failure of the supply department is calamitous.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Church, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Sept. 24,  
1846 But Grant did not confine his rebellion to words. He participated in the Battle of Monterey in violation of orders, which, as he said, in the event of mishap would have exposed him to serious consequences.

Sept. 21,  
1846 When the Fourth Infantry was led to take part in the attack from the east end of Monterey in support of the main attack from the west, Grant had been left in command of the camp at Walnut Springs, three miles from Monterey. The advance had not been thoughtfully planned. Coming directly under fire of the Black Fort and of other batteries, the regiment fell into confusion and retreated toward its left flank. Grant, who had advanced from his post and followed his regiment on horseback, galloped to join and help rally the defeated soldiers, the only officer to remain mounted in the hail of fire. He helped to reorganize the men under cover, and here gave his horse to the adjutant, who had become exhausted trying to carry on his duties on foot. It was an act of generosity, not of caution, on Grant's part, for he promptly secured another horse; and when this adjutant, Lieutenant Hoskins, was killed in the next advance, Quartermaster Grant, *absent without leave*, was appointed acting adjutant.

Two days later his regiment entered the city and in company with the Third Infantry made another ill-considered attack across the fire-swept streets toward the citadel.

Sept. 23,  
1846 Colonel Garland, commanding the brigade, with the bravest of his men reached a position within one square of the plaza but was unable to advance further. Needing ammunition and reinforcements, he called for a volunteer for this hazardous duty. Grant, first to respond among two regiments of gallant men, galloped alone across the fire-swept streets to bring up the reserves. Before the ammunition was collected, the advance troops retreated; but Worth's attack on the other flank of Monterey succeeded and compelled the surrender of the city.

This experience was not forgotten in years to come. He knew in future times of stress that the ammunition supply

must be kept up; and the terms of the surrender, "The prisoners were paroled and permitted to take their horses and personal property with them," recurred to him in his greatest moment.

When we consider the great capacity Grant developed in after life to hold both men and generals to their duty in times of stress, we may speculate whether Garland's attack might not have shared the victory if the imperturbable Lieutenant Grant had been kept at the front.

His outstanding achievements in this battle, however, must have given a special position in the regiment to "this man of fire,"<sup>7</sup> because, in addition to performing his staff duties, he took active part in every subsequent battle of the war, culminating with his extraordinary performance at San Cosme. It may have been this habit that led him later to the absences from his command which, however much justified, thrice nearly ruined him.

Sept. 13,  
1847

During the Monterey campaign Major Hamer, who, when a member of Congress, had secured Grant's appointment to the Military Academy, wrote:

I have found in Lieutenant Grant a most remarkable and valuable soldier. I anticipate for him a brilliant future, if he should have an opportunity to display his powers when they mature. Young as he is, he has been of great value and service to me.

Of course, Lieutenant Grant is too young for command, but his capacity for future military usefulness is undoubted.<sup>8</sup>

Grant was not with his regiment at the battle of Buena Vista, but rejoined it at Camargo and accompanied it to Vera Cruz and Mexico City.

His son Jesse properly and proudly records that Grant alone, among all those who had the opportunity, bought lemons; he bought all the lemons available at Point Isabel, and on the hot voyage to Vera Cruz, when scurvy broke out on the transports, he was able to supply not only the troops to whom he owed obligation, but others whose wants had

<sup>7</sup> Louis A. Coolidge, *Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from Church, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

not been foreseen by their own officers; and that he employed the tedious hours of the voyage in training "his men in handling and packing their camp equipment, setting up tents, and in all the details of operating a commissariat. This was mentioned in official reports as of great assistance to the whole army in providing trained men to instruct less provident regiments after they landed south of Vera Cruz"<sup>9</sup>—and was promptly forgotten.

He also rendered another service out of the line of duty for which no official record appears to have been made. He purchased and captured valuable maps which he made available, among others, to Captain Robert E. Lee, the chief staff-officer, who had not provided them for himself.

"At Corpus Christi," says Church,

Grant spent so much time in studying a map of Mexico he had obtained at New Orleans, and in gathering data concerning the topography of that country from an acquaintance who was thoroughly familiar with it, that he was constantly called upon by his superiors for information they had not been able to obtain. At Matamoras he secured a much more valuable map, which had been abandoned by a high officer of the Mexican Army in his flight, and reconstructed his other map from it, surrendering the original to General Scott after the capture of Vera Cruz. General Taylor, Captain Robert E. Lee of the engineers, other staff officers, and the division and brigade commanders were also dependent upon this enterprising and studious second lieutenant for much valuable information concerning the country they were preparing to invade.<sup>10</sup>

All through the campaign from Vera Cruz to Mexico City Grant served as quartermaster on the march and as combatant in action.

April 18,  
1847

He left his supply company at Cerro Gordo to stand beside Captain McClellan and watch the fall of shot from the latter's battery. Later he exercised, without incident, the first independent expedition of his career. He took a large train of wagons on a march of several days in search of supplies. However, since he refers in his *Memoirs* to an

<sup>9</sup> Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Church, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

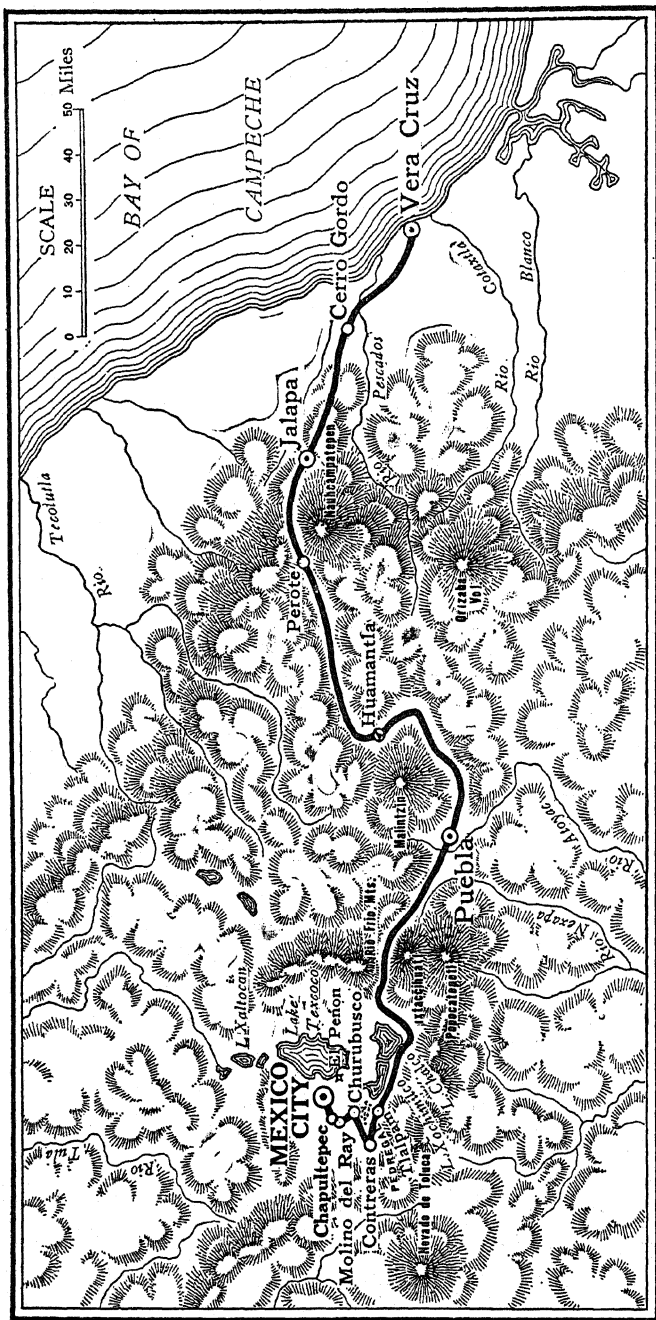
escort of a thousand men, some unnamed officer of higher rank must have been in command of the troops.

Lieutenant Grant was in the advance guard of General Worth which passed through the mountains and established a bridge-head at Pueblo. In his *Memoirs* he records an unfavorable opinion of this commander, whose conduct under responsibility he compares most unfavorably with that of General Scott. May 15,  
1847

After the long delay at Pueblo awaiting troops to replace those whose time of enlistment had expired, Grant advanced with the army over the undefended pass of Rio Frio and took part in the battle of Contreras. This victory, like the one at Cerro Gordo, he attributes entirely to the skill of General Scott and the engineers under the direction of Captain Robert E. Lee. The pursuit was not so skilfully conducted, leading to heavy fighting in the village of Churubusco, in which Grant took part. Aug. 20,  
1847

After a further delay of three weeks, this time due to diplomatic negotiations, the advance was resumed by a frontal assault on a stone building known as Molino del Rey. General Worth, who planned the battle, moved his troops by night to within assaulting distance. Lieutenant Grant, although without any obligation to do so and without any command, was among the first to carry the mill. So unexpectedly successful was the assault that if the commanding general had been present, or if any of the senior officers had possessed unusual military ability, the army could have continued on the heels of the enemy into Chapultepec. Sept. 8,  
1847

These lessons were not lost upon Grant. Night marches were to become a feature of his generalship, and he was to reiterate in his orders that generals were to take advantage of any favorable condition presenting itself. In the assault on Molino del Rey, Grant assumed command of a few soldiers and carried on a small operation of his own. This taught him that at the front soldiers will follow any one who leads. Two days later in the advance on San Cosme



GENERAL SCOTT'S CAMPAIGN

he took command of troops and initiated movements which materially assisted the victory. Let Grant describe them in his own words:

I was on the road to San Cosme, and witnessed most that took place on that route. When opposition was encountered our troops sheltered themselves by keeping under the arches supporting the aqueduct, advancing an arch at a time. We encountered no serious obstruction until within gunshot of the point where the road we were on intersects that running east to the city—the point where the aqueduct turns at a right angle. I have described the defenses of this position before. There were but three commissioned officers besides myself, that I can now call to mind, with the advance when the above position was reached. One of these officers was a Lieutenant Semmes, of the navy. I think Captain Gore and Lieutenant Judah, of the Fourth Infantry, were the others. Our progress was stopped for the time by the single piece of artillery at the angle of the roads and the infantry occupying the housetops back from it.

West of the road from where we were stood a house occupying the southwest angle made by the San Cosme road and the road we were moving upon. A stone wall ran from the house along each of these roads for a considerable distance, and thence back until it joined, inclosing quite a yard about the house. I watched my opportunity and skipped across the road and behind the south wall. Proceeding cautiously to the west corner of the inclosure, I peeped around, and, seeing nobody, continued, still cautiously, until the road running east and west was reached. I then returned to the troops and called for volunteers. All that were close to me, or that heard me,—about a dozen,—offered their services. Commanding them to carry their arms at a trail, I watched our opportunity and got them across the road and under cover of the wall beyond before the enemy had a shot at us. Our men under cover of the arches kept a close watch on the intrenchments that crossed our path and the housetops beyond, and whenever a head showed itself above the parapets they would fire at it. Our crossing was thus made practicable without loss.

When we reached a safe position I instructed my little command again to carry their arms at a trail, not to fire at the enemy until they were ordered, and to move very cautiously, following me, until the San Cosme road was reached; we would then be on the flank

of the men serving the gun on the road, and with no obstruction between us and them. When we reached the southwest corner of the inclosure before described I saw some United States troops pushing north through a shallow ditch near by, who had come up since my reconnaissance. This was the company of Captain Horace Brooks, of the artillery, acting as infantry. I explained to Brooks briefly what I had discovered and what I was about to do. He said, as I knew the ground and he did not, I might go on and he would follow. As soon as we got on the road leading to the city the troops serving the gun on the parapet retreated, and those on the house-tops near by followed; our men went after them in such close pursuit—the troops we had left under the arches joining—that a second line across the road, about half-way between the first and the *garita*, was carried. No reinforcements had yet come up except Brooks's company, and the position we had taken was too advanced to be held by so small a force. It was given up, but retaken later in the day with some loss.

Worth's command gradually advanced to the front now open to it. Later in the day, in reconnoitering, I found a church off to the south of the road, which looked to me as if the belfry would command the ground back of the *Garita San Cosme*. I got an officer of the *voltigeurs*, with a mountain howitzer and men to work it, to go with me. The road being in possession of the enemy, we had to take the field to the south to reach the church. This took us over several ditches breast-deep in water and grown up with water-plants. These ditches, however, were not over eight or ten feet in width. The howitzer was taken to pieces and carried by the men to its destination. When I knocked for admission a priest came to the door, who, while extremely polite, declined to admit us. With the little Spanish then at my command I explained to him that he might save property by opening the door, and he certainly would save himself from becoming a prisoner, for a time at least; and besides, I intended to go in whether he consented or not. He began to see his duty in the same light that I did, and opened the door, though he did not look as if it gave him special pleasure to do so. The gun was carried to the belfry and put together. We were not more than two or three hundred yards from *San Cosme*. The shots from our little gun dropped in upon the enemy and created great confusion. Why they did not send out a small party and capture us I do not know. We had no infantry or other defenses besides our one gun.



The effect of this gun upon the troops about the gate of the city was so marked that General Worth saw it from his position. He was so pleased that he sent a staff-officer, Lieutenant Pemberton,—later lieutenant-general commanding the defenses of Vicksburg,—to bring me to him. He expressed his gratification at the services the howitzer in the church steeple was doing, saying that every shot was effective, and ordered a captain of voltigeurs to report to me with another howitzer, to be placed along with the one already rendering so much service. I could not tell the general that there was not room enough in the steeple for another gun, because he probably would have looked upon such a statement as a contradiction from a second lieutenant. I took the captain with me, but did not use his gun.<sup>11</sup>

This victory in which Grant, as a lieutenant, bore such a conspicuous part ended the military operations of the war. For his action in this engagement he was especially commended by Major Francis Lee, General Garland, and General Worth, being one of two officers of the line so mentioned by the latter general. He was also complimented by two promotions of Brevet rank, a form of reward similar to the decorations conferred in the World War, which cost the Government nothing and gave the recipient no more.

Grant's observations on the two commanders-in-chief he had served under are clairvoyant:

I had now been in battle with two leading commanders conducting armies in a foreign land. The contrast between the two was very marked. General Taylor never wore uniform, but dressed himself entirely for comfort. He moved about the field in which he was operating to see the situation through his own eyes. Often he would be without staff-officers, and when he was accompanied by them there was no prescribed order in which they followed. He was very much given to sitting his horse sideways,—with both feet on one side,—particularly on the battle-field. General Scott was the reverse in all these particulars. He always wore all the uniform prescribed or allowed by law when he inspected his lines. Word would be sent to all division and brigade commanders in advance, notifying them of the hour when the commanding general might be ex-

<sup>11</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 121-24.

pected. This was done so that all the army might be under arms to salute their chief as he passed. On these occasions he wore his dress-uniform, cocked hat, aiguillettes, saber, and spurs. His staff proper, besides all officers constructively on his staff,—engineers, inspectors, quartermasters, etc., that could be spared,—followed, also in uniform and in prescribed order. Orders were prepared with great care, and evidently with the view that they should be a history of what followed.

In their modes of expressing thought these two generals contrasted quite as strongly as in their other characteristics. General Scott was precise in language; cultivated a style peculiarly his own; was proud of his rhetoric; not averse to speaking of himself,—often in the third person,—and he could bestow praise upon the person he was talking about without the least embarrassment. Taylor was not a conversationalist, but on paper he could put his meaning so plainly that there could be no mistaking it. He knew how to express what he wanted to say in the fewest well-chosen words, but would not sacrifice meaning to the construction of high-sounding sentences. But with their opposite characteristics both were great and successful soldiers; both were true, patriotic, and upright in all their dealings. Both were pleasant to serve under—Taylor was pleasant to serve with. Scott saw more through the eyes of his staff-officers than through his own; his plans were deliberately prepared, and fully expressed in orders. Taylor saw for himself, and gave orders to meet the emergency without reference to how they would read in history.<sup>12</sup>

Grant was soon to see General Scott embroiled with all his principal generals, whom he arrested, and shortly after to see him removed from command of the army that he had led to victory, while General Taylor was nominated and elected President of the United States. When his career as a general began, it was not hard for Grant to decide which one to follow in his outward manifestations.

The battles over, but still under pressure of events, Grant labored mightily as quartermaster, obtaining cloth and manufacturing uniforms for the troops in his charge; renting a bakery and baking bread, not only for his own regi-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 105-7.

ment, but for others, so that he earned a larger sum in a few weeks for his regimental fund than the amount of his pay for the whole war.

We may pass over his travels in Mexico, his return to the United States, and his garrison duties at Sackett's Harbor and Detroit, and conclude the first phase of his military career with his conduct at Panama on the voyage he took with his regiment to California.

Arriving at Aspinwall, the rifle companies of the regiment were easily transferred to Panama and placed aboard ship, but the contractor for the transportation of the public property, the company of troops guarding the same, and the soldiers' families was unable to carry out his contract.

July 16,  
1852

Cholera broke out in his camp, whereupon Grant sent the company of soldiers with their officers and the doctors on to Panama and remained behind with the property, the sick, and the families. About one-third of his little band died of the disease. Grant, dismissing the contractor, made a new contract at double the established rates—an act of initiative and generosity well understood by those who know how a slacker clerk in Washington might have charged the extra cost against him and kept him in slavery for life paying off this debt.

Nor were his troubles ended on reaching Panama, for, according to the custom of the day, the disease had to be allowed to run its course, and there ensued seven weeks of suspense more exhausting than the suspense of battle.

In the Mexican War Lieutenant Grant had displayed an executive capacity, a personal daring, and an instinct for tactics not equaled by any other junior officer in the army. Nor was this ability equaled in the early lives of any of the other generals who have risen to great fame, unless by Clive of India.

It is to the permanent shame of the generals of the Mexican War who knew him and of the army in which he could not have failed to become conspicuous, if only for a time, that so outstanding a young officer was not put in a posi-

tion to develop his talents, not only as a reward to him, but to make sure of his services at need.

Unfortunately, the tradition and common law of armies has been to protect officers' commissions as property rights, no less against brilliant fellow-officers than against civilians. The general-staff system as a corrective of this principle, which incidentally brings in evils of its own as great or greater, was not to appear in the American army for more than half a century.

And so Grant went on to his dreary garrison life, in which he was remarked for his lucid accounts of the Mexican War and his brilliant exposition of the problems presented by the war then going on in the Crimea, to his controversy with Major Buchanan, and his resignation.

July 31,  
1854

The occasion of his resignation was alleged intoxication while paying off troops, a subject of continued attack and innuendo throughout his military career. A detractor relates as an example of drunkenness an occasion when Grant drove three horses in tandem. The man who made the statement can never have driven horses. A drunken man could no more drive three horses in tandem than he could jump his mount over the guns of a battery, which Grant also did at that time. Both incidents were evidently the outbursts of a fearless and expert horseman against the boredom of garrison life in California.

Buchanan continued in the army and at the end of the Civil War was still a major. Grant, after eight hard years of civil life, could reënter the army only as an officer of volunteers, but he won the war and became general-in-chief. That a jackal should have been allowed to mangle a lion cub is a smudge on the history of the military service.

Such evidence as has come to my attention does not indicate that Grant was a drunkard at any time, or indeed that he drank more than any number of successful men in and out of military life. For purposes of comparison I have looked up the records of all the outstanding generals in the war and find only one teetotaler among them, Stonewall

Jackson, for J. H. Wilson and Rawlins cannot be ranked so high. Several generals who distinguished themselves drank a great deal; one of the Union's most conspicuous failures never touched a drop of liquor.

Let me point out that neither the viciousness of the last years of Edward III nor the wildness of the youth of Henry V are set out as stains on their military accomplishments, nor is the folly of young Cæsar or the debauchery of Alexander used to belittle them as soldiers. The madness of Peter the Great and of Charles XII are suggested as indications of genius. The gross appetites and vices by which Napoleon incapacitated himself for generalship are omitted or glossed over by his biographers. That frailties in one period of Grant's life should be dug up and magnified by foreign writers who wish to tarnish his genius at least indicates purpose, but that they should be seriously accepted by American commentators indicates a tragic lack of national self-respect.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ILLINOIS GENERAL

GRANT'S civil career was inconspicuous. Whether it might have developed into something of more consequence if no war had come, we can never tell. Presumably not. For Grant's greatest quality of fearlessness could not help him, and he seems to have had an inability to exert himself save under stress. It was as if his powers were torpid or so deeply planted as not to be called forth by any ordinary stimulant and reached their fullest expression under conditions which would drive more volatile natures into hysterics or coma.

Although not outstanding in Galena, where he was living at the outbreak of the Civil War, Grant was not in disrepute. For Captain Grant, formerly of the regular army, was made presiding officer of a military mass-meeting to encourage enlistments.

1861

When the city raised a company of soldiers, it offered the captaincy to Grant—not a high offer to the hero of San Cosme's church steeple, who had been commissioned captain in the regular army, but all that the city had to give and more than the regular army would offer him now. He declined it.

Grant even refused the command of a regiment of Illinois volunteers which Governor Yates offered him. He was a regular-army soldier, with the inevitable distaste of the regular for volunteers, and he wished to serve among his old associates. For the regular army was being preserved intact, officered throughout by West Point graduates. It was to shed great luster upon its battle flags in years to come, even though it was of course never able to "give anything like the complete victory to the side it fought on"

which Field-Marshal Wolseley thought would have been produced by one army-corps of regular troops. This "pomade-and-facings" hero of the blunders of the Crimea and countless expeditions against unarmed savages was to die after forty years' service without learning that the stately minuet of the parade ground was not the movement of the battle-field.

Grant wrote to the adjutant-general in Washington soliciting the command of a regiment, and he made personal calls upon his old comrade, George B. McClellan, then a major-general at Cincinnati, hoping to obtain the rank of major on his staff. But both appeals were ignored. He then accepted command of the Twenty-first Illinois Infantry.

June,  
1861

Like "the stone which the builders refused" he was "to become the head stone of the corner," not among his old associates but as a leader of volunteers.

For in spite of testy statements to the contrary, experienced soldiers are enormously in demand among civilians at the outbreak of hostilities, as even the simplest of things military seem difficult to the novices. It is only when the civilians have become soldiers and the brilliant ones among them seek the higher ranks of generalship that friction arises.

It has been suggested by a detractor that McClellan rejected Grant because he remembered Grant's intemperance in the old army. An equally plausible suggestion would be that he had perceived and resented Grant's greater coolness and courage under the shell-fire of Cerro Gordo.

Both Grant's and McClellan's accounts of this incident contain pathos. Grant in his eclipse was supersensitive because of the apparent inattention of his former comrade. McClellan gave this version of the incident after his sun had set:

I think it was during my absence on this very trip [to Indianapolis] that Grant came to Cincinnati to ask me as an old acquaintance, to give him employment or a place on my staff. Marcy or Seth Williams saw him and told him that if he would await my

return, doubtless I would do something for him; but before I got back he was telegraphed that he could have a regiment in Illinois, and at once returned hither, so that I did not see him. This was his good luck; for had I been there I would no doubt have given him a place on my staff, and he would probably have remained with me and shared my fate.<sup>1</sup>

March 9,  
1864

When Grant became commander-in-chief and director of the Army of the Potomac, Seth Williams was not advanced—or demoted.

If McClellan had taken Grant on his staff, would Grant have supplied the stiffening to carry the Army of the Potomac into Richmond in 1862? Would McClellan in consequence have become the hero of the war and Grant have remained an obscure staff-officer? We cannot tell. It is likely that contemplation of such possibilities as these made Grant the fatalist he became in later life, after he had changed the course of history.

The men of Grant's new regiment were not the pioneers of King's Mountain and New Orleans, but they were vastly better soldier material than the conscripts of Europe or the volunteers in the Eastern states. They knew the use of firearms better than regular soldiers. They were skilful in the use of the ax and accustomed to the spade. They could ford or bridge rivers, build and manage river-boats. They lived in a country which had not been much improved since they settled it, and had learned to overcome natural difficulties of the terrain. Many of them had migrated to their homes, and in this way had obtained marching experience. They were accustomed to mutual coöperation—a splendid soldierly quality—but not to discipline; nor would they learn this even from General Grant. They would have to acquire it from enemy punishment.

Soldiers enter the army in war-time in great excitement, which is increased by a feeling of self-satisfaction and by the expressed admiration of others. When the enemy is remote, it is not easy to put men in the correct mental con-

<sup>1</sup> *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 47.



dition to fight with deadly weapons. This fact accounts for the long training-period formerly demanded in the European armies and the great surprise of European officers at the comparative efficiency of short-service troops soon after their first contact with the enemy.

The Western troops did not know "tactics," as military drill is described by Grant; nor did their colonel, who never read the textbook of the day translated from the French by the Confederate general, Hardee. This was no loss, because the regulations were based upon the viciously wrong methods used in Napoleon's Imperial armies and were as fully unsuited to the war about to break forth as the drill regulations of the countries that embarked in the World War a half-century later. Attacks in formations prescribed in the pre-war text-books did not often succeed in either war.

Military training in time of peace is indispensable in a settled nation to protect it against a sudden overthrow by an organized aggressor, but such preparation, based, as it must be, upon someone's conception of what went on in a previous war, is inevitably faulty. Manœuvres free from all the difficulties of real warfare and the total absence of fire give their practitioners a totally erroneous idea of what can be done in warfare.

When war breaks out, the men most thoroughly imbued with these mistaken ideas are in command and in the rear, far away from actualities, so that the combatants are involved in evolutions impossible of accomplishment, are slaughtered by thousands and hundreds of thousands, while the lessons they have so dearly bought are learned, oh, so slowly, by those in authority. Side by side with training and manœuvres must go a warning against the cocksureness attendant upon inexperienced rank, and even more upon general staff assignments;<sup>2</sup> and in another war we must insist that the commanders of armies find out by personal observation what happens in the combat zone.

In all his many movements before embarking upon his

<sup>2</sup> See Robert R. McCormick, *The Army of 1918*, p. 231.

great campaigns as well as in them, Grant was the best-equipped soldier present, by experience as well as by natural endowment. He had seen volunteer troops in Mexico, and he now based his personal conduct in their presence upon his observation of their reactions to General Scott and General Taylor.

He joined his regiment in an old suit of civilian clothes and knocked down and tied the first soldier to show insubordination, after which example of personal prowess he used stern regular-army discipline on others and tied to the tail-gates of his wagons soldiers who refused to march.

Factional strife had broken out in Missouri before Grant was appointed to command the regiment, and he was hurried to the scene of hostilities with his command ill-equipped and unorganized. Fortunately, the demands made upon the regiment were not serious, and we may be sure that it took form in the performance of real military duty much more rapidly than it could have done in a training-camp.

July 3,  
1861

Commissioned on the first of June, 1861, two months later he conducted his first operation against the enemy, a wily guerrilla named Harris, who was fighting under commission of the state of Missouri. Grant, in later years, could afford to describe his trepidation:

June 1,  
1861

As we approached the brow of the hill from which it was expected we could see Harris's camp, and possibly find his men ready formed to meet us, my heart kept getting higher and higher, until it felt to me as though it was in my throat. I would have given anything then to have been back in Illinois, but I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on. When we reached a point from which the valley below was in full view I halted. The place where Harris had been encamped a few days before was still there, and the marks of a recent encampment were plainly visible, but the troops were gone. My heart resumed its place. It occurred to me at once that Harris had been as much afraid of me as I had been of him. This was a view of the question I had never taken before, but it was one I never forgot afterward.

July,  
1861

From that event to the close of the war I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy, though I always felt more or less anxiety. I never forgot that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his.<sup>3</sup>

Grant's reputation among the fighting men began to rise, but he was to continue to the top a political soldier in the full sense in which that expression is used derogatively, for he never received a promotion by seniority and all but one of his promotions originated with his sponsors in Congress.

Appointed colonel of state troops in June by the Governor of Illinois, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general on August 7, 1861, one of the four brigadiers assigned to the state of Illinois, having been appointed upon the recommendation of its delegation in Congress. The Illinois delegation was asked to select the generals to be nominated from their state. Grant was the only man to receive the vote of the entire delegation and became the senior general from Illinois. The other Illinoisans, in order, were Hurlbut, Prentiss, and McClernand. Among the brigadiers senior to him appointed at the same time were Franklin, Sherman, Buell, Pope, Hooker, Terry,<sup>4</sup> and Fitz-John Porter.

Aug. 7,  
1861

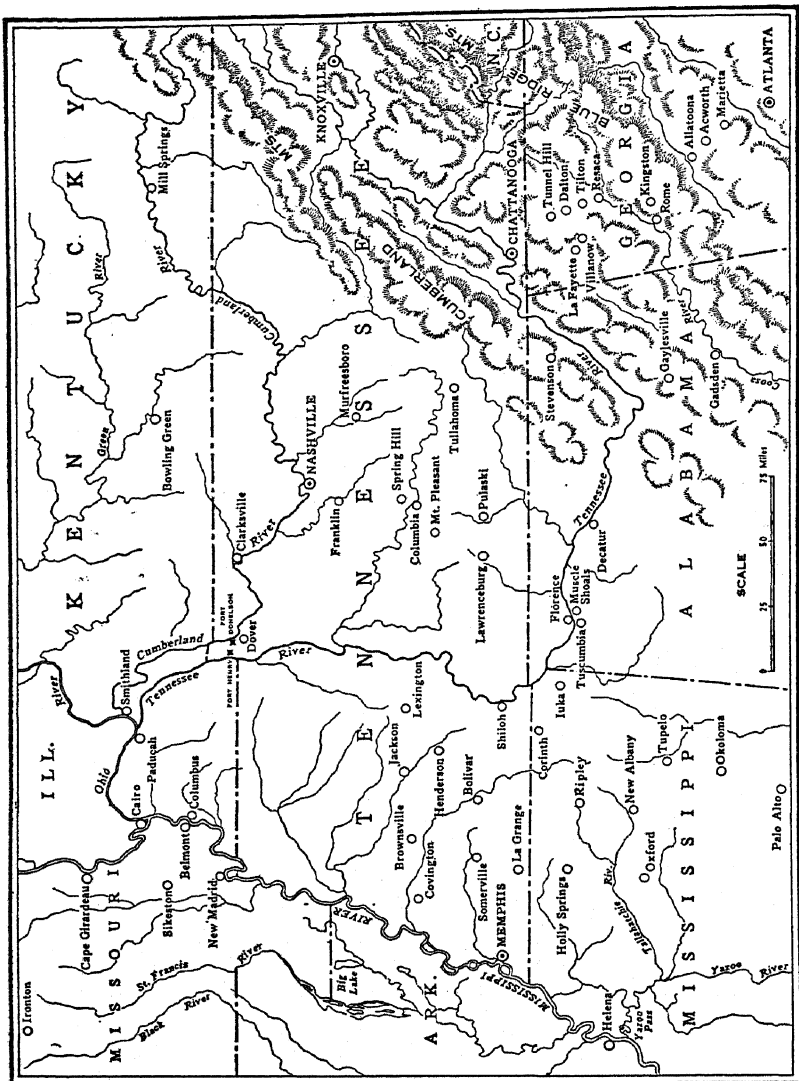
The summer of 1861 was one of inevitable confusion, regiments being organized into brigades, with the consequent friction between officers coming into unexpected relationships of inferior to superior. It was during this time that Grant had two controversies with General Prentiss over the question of seniority, during which Prentiss referred to Grant as a drunkard.<sup>5</sup> Some one brought this to Grant's attention—when, we do not know—and Grant never forgave it. In spite of outstanding services, Prentiss received no recognition and left the army before the end of the war.

After serving in various parts of Missouri, Grant was

<sup>3</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, I, 200-1.

<sup>4</sup> Terry was a militia officer who rose to the top rank of Grant's generals in after years. The others were regulars.

<sup>5</sup> Albert D. Richardson, *Personal History of U. S. Grant*, p. 84.



THE THEATER OF GENERAL GRANT'S ACTIVITIES IN 1861, 1862, AND 1863

transferred on September 4th to Cairo, Illinois, the southernmost point of Union territory. He did not arrive an instant too soon, for the Confederate general, Polk, had occupied Columbus, Kentucky, without arousing any activities from Frémont, commanding in Missouri, or Anderson, commanding in Ohio, and was pushing a column toward Paducah on the south side of the Ohio River, a city of great military importance at the junction of the Ohio and Tennessee rivers.

Sept. 4,  
1861

Advised of this upon the day of his arrival, Grant immediately occupied Paducah, anticipating the Confederates by a few hours. Since the state of Kentucky was claiming to maintain a status of neutrality, he explained the necessity for his action to the citizens, who were for the Confederacy, and to the legislature of the state, which was for the Union, for which latter act he was reprimanded by General Frémont.

Sept. 5,  
1861

To complete his hold on the waterways, he also took possession of Smithland, the point of land where the Cumberland comes into the Ohio, twelve miles east of Paducah.

Grant now held three gateways to the South—the Mississippi, the Tennessee, and the Cumberland rivers—with the consequent opportunity to advance in force upon any one of them, an obvious advantage which no one in authority above him, in the West or in the East, could work up courage to act upon.

The Union troops under Grant's command had been confronting and manœuvering against the enemy for months, under instructions to avoid hostilities. The men had been organized, armed, and drilled, and they felt ready for battle. The eternal marching and countermarching without action was becoming ridiculous. The point had been reached at which their efficiency would begin to decrease unless put to the trial. The Battle of Belmont furnished the trial.

Nov. 7,  
1861

Grant's account of this battle is simply that he had embarked his command on steamers to make still another demonstration and came into the presence of the enemy at Columbus and Belmont; sensed that if he withdrew with-

Nov. 7,  
1861

out attacking he would destroy the confidence and the patience of his men; and consequently led them in assault upon the camp at Belmont.

Colonel A. L. Conger believes that with the lapse of time and the passage of momentous events Grant, when he gave this explanation, had forgotten some things that had transpired in his early days. He quotes a letter from Grant to General Smith at Paducah, on November 5th:

In pursuance of directions from headquarters Western Department I have sent from here a force of about 3,000 men all armed,<sup>6</sup> towards Indian Ford on the St. Francis River, and also a force of one regiment from Cape Girardeau in the same direction. I am now, under the same instructions, fitting out an expedition to menace Belmont, and will take all the force proper to spare from here—probably not more than 3,000 men. If you can make a demonstration towards Columbus at the same time with a portion of your command, it would probably keep the enemy from throwing over the river much more force than they now have there, and might enable me to drive those they now have out of Missouri. The principal point to gain is to prevent the enemy from sending a force to fall in the rear of those now out from this command. I will leave here to-morrow night and land some 12 miles below.<sup>7</sup>

And one written to General Frémont on September 10: "If it were discretionary with me, with a little addition to my present force I would take Columbus."<sup>8</sup>

And that he had ordered Colonel Oglesby, in Missouri, to "turn towards New Madrid, halting to communicate with me at Belmont."<sup>9</sup>

If Colonel Conger is correct in his surmise, Grant attempted here the first of his military combinations. We may even become pedantic and suggest that he attempted a "double envelopment." In any event, he landed above Columbus, attacked and drove from its camp the Confed-

<sup>6</sup> There were more men than arms in the Western forces at that period. This need not cause wonder; troops were sent to the frontier in Mexico without ammunition although attacks by the Mexicans were expected.

<sup>7</sup> A. L. Conger, *The Rise of U. S. Grant*, p. 372.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

erate garrison already reinforced by four regiments. His army, extraordinarily successful up to that moment, then betrayed itself into one of the oldest and most insidious of military errors. It fell to plundering the enemy camp.

During this celebration the defeated enemy were rallied with the assistance of two more regiments, were brought across the river, and Grant was compelled to fight his way back to the landing.

Many hours have been spent devising criticisms of this battle. I consider them hypercritical. The comment that the five companies left behind as a guard for the steamers could not be considered a reserve is pure vocabularinism. The obvious answer to the charge that too many men were engaged in the initial attack is—the attack succeeded. A lesser number of men might have been repulsed. To the suggestion that Grant took too rosy a view of this action the reply is that it is the general who takes too pessimistic a view that generally loses. Battles are lost either by generals giving up hope or by the troops breaking away from their command. History records few of the latter.

We should also note that Smith did not keep the enemy from throwing troops across the river, that the gunboats did nothing to prevent it, and that Oglesby did not communicate with Grant—*sic semper* combinations.

There is no need for a labored explanation of Grant's reasoning at Belmont. He was not then commander-in-chief, but a mere brigadier of volunteers on a minor expedition. He saw a chance to strike an outpost of the enemy. He rushed the enemy camp, burnt it, took guns and provisions, and made off as Forrest, Jackson, or any born soldier would have done—but there are not many born soldiers.

## CHAPTER III

### DONELSON

THE military organization of the United States was well under way by the end of 1861. Large numbers of troops were being enlisted, trained, and armed with old-fashioned muskets, though modern ones were available. The front had been divided into three sectors. General George B. McClellan, commander-in-chief, commanded the Eastern sector and the Army of the Potomac in person. His nominee, General Don Carlos Buell, commanded the center sector from the Appalachian Mountains to the Cumberland River; and General W. H. Halleck, everything west of that line.

And yet the year 1861 ran out without any movement to put down the rebellion, because the three generals commanding the armies were not the stuff of which soldiers could be made. Not four years at West Point nor twenty years in the army, not experience in Mexico nor wide reading of military literature, could supply to Generals McClellan, Buell, and Halleck the characters which Nature had failed to provide.

Of the three, McClellan turned out to be a good organizer and a weak commander. Buell looked like a fighter but failed utterly in the face of the enemy. In after life he demonstrated marked literary ability at the expense of his successful colleagues. Halleck had gained a great reputation as a military authority by his translation of Jomini's *Life of Napoleon* and other works. He had become a compendium of Franco-English military terms which he did not understand but used with considerable effect among men who did not understand them either but imagined they evidenced a military genius beyond the common ken.

At that time the only man in authority of sufficient mental



capacity and character to direct a war was President Lincoln. He conceived correct military movements, but he did not have the time or the grasp of military details to execute them himself, and the generals he called upon to do so either ignored him or failed from personal limitations.

All through the summer and fall and into the winter McClellan and Buell and Halleck wrote each other grandiloquent letters, discussed great movements—and did nothing. They quarreled for possession of more territory and more troops to command, but shrank from attacking the enemy with such powers as they had. Grant in the meanwhile was training and organizing the troops in his district, carrying out the interminable diversions ordered by his superiors, and collaborating in studies for joint operations with the naval officers commanding the flotilla which President Lincoln had provided.

Nov. 6,  
1861

On one diversion he accompanied the inexperienced General McClelland to the rear of Columbus on the Mississippi and sent General C. F. Smith, his old West Point commandant, to Fort Heiman on the Tennessee River. Smith reported that Fort Heiman could be taken. The navy also favored an attack *up* the Tennessee because any gunboats disabled there would drift away from the fort, rather than *down* the Mississippi where they would be carried under the guns of Columbus. Grant wrote and even went to St. Louis to ask permission to attack, but without avail.

Finally Buell out-argued Halleck over the right to command an expedition up the *Cumberland* River, and Halleck, who had snubbed Grant's many requests to attack forts Heiman and Henry on the *Tennessee* River, was induced suddenly to give his assent in order to maintain the importance of his sector and retain the troops in his command.

Grant gave him no time to reconsider and embarked at once; whereupon Halleck, unnerved by the responsibility he had assumed, redoubled his correspondence with Buell and McClellan, asking for more troops and diversions, to

which Buell replied with recriminations and dark forebodings.

Feb. 2,  
1862

Grant started his troops for Fort Henry on the second of February, he himself following the next evening. On coming up with the advance, General McClernand commanding, which had debarked about ten miles from Fort Henry, he considered the distance too great to march and moved the troops and their transports six miles nearer, to a point just beyond gunshot from the fort. Grant was clearly right; McClernand may have felt that he was humiliated in the eyes of his troops. The quarrel between these two heavy fighting men may have started there.

Feb. 6,  
1862

The west shore of the river, as we have seen, had been reconnoitered by General Smith. The east bank was reconnoitered on the fifth of February, and on the sixth the movement against the forts began: General Smith commanding on the west bank, with which he was familiar, and General Grant directing the movement on the east bank. The armies marched on both sides of the river, and the navy attacked Fort Henry.

Progress over the flooded land was unexpectedly slow, the naval victory unexpectedly easy. Before the soldiers came up, the garrisons of forts Heiman and Henry had retreated toward Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, thoroughly frightened at the Yankees' strength.

The first capture of a Confederate fort was an event of vast moral importance. It caused General Joseph E. Johnston, commanding the Confederate sector, to abandon Bowling Green, which Buell had never dared to attack, and to reinforce Fort Donelson heavily.

The escape of the garrison was a disappointment to Grant, but we may surmise that the frightened fugitives of forts Heiman and Henry may have been of more value to the North in spreading the infection of their fear in Fort Donelson than they could have been as prisoners.

Blessed with a simple mind, Grant immediately addressed himself to the new problem—the capture of Fort Donelson,





eleven miles away. That he planned this for the morrow he wrote Halleck in a message which could not reach the latter for several days, covering himself in some measure from censure, yet not furnishing the dormouse strategist any chance to forbid the attack.

Feb. 7,  
1862

Grant moved, however, with necessary deliberation. He evacuated his few prisoners; made a hasty, though unsuccessful, effort to render secure the captured public property; reconnoitered the Tennessee River down to the Memphis and Ohio Railroad bridge, which he destroyed; thoroughly scouted the roads to forts Donelson and Dover; and on the twelfth of the month moved his command by two roads across the isthmus. He left General Lew Wallace with a brigade of Smith's division at Fort Henry, separated from his command but not beyond reach, as he was later at Crump's Landing. He sent around by the river, to join him in front of Donelson, a brigade of six regiments under Colonel Thayer which had arrived at Fort Henry on transports just as the army was starting overland across the isthmus.

Feb. 12,  
1862

Grant, therefore, marched against Fort Donelson with less men than he had at his disposal when he moved against Fort Henry. Arriving before the fleet, he spent the intervening two days investing the fort, reconnoitering, and approaching its defenses.

A siege is so much more easily represented on a map than by words that I shall merely indicate that General McClelland's corps was placed on the right, behind a creek, with the mission to prevent the retreat or a reinforcement of the garrison, and that General Smith's division was given the left of the line on both sides of Hickman's Creek, to establish communication with the expected fleet. The guns were dug in on the hill-crests, but the infantry did not intrench, merely taking shelter behind the abundant cover afforded by the rough country.

There was considerable skirmishing, and one attack on a Confederate battery by McClelland, who showed, as al-

Feb. 13,  
1862

ways, more initiative and greater combativeness than discipline, or what is often passed off for discipline.

During these days Grant contained an army of 21,000 men with an army of 15,000 men, a feat termed "imposing upon the enemy."

Feb. 14,  
1862

By the time the flotilla arrived, Grant felt the need of more troops to perfect the investment of the fort. He therefore ordered Lew Wallace to bring his brigade from Fort Henry, and be it remembered that Wallace arrived promptly. Returning this brigade to General Smith, Grant formed the brigade of Colonel Thayer and other troops arriving the same day into a division in the center under the command of Wallace and closed up the flank troops on the river above and below the fort.

Further reinforcements for Grant, especially the division of General Nelson from Buell's command, were known to be on the way, but time was more important than numbers to Grant. He concerted with Commodore Foote that the latter should pass Fort Donelson and join in a naval and military attack on the open south end of the fort.

Feb. 15,  
1862

The next afternoon Commodore Foote's gunboats advanced to the attack. Although at Fort Henry they had won the battle before Grant was ready to coöperate with them, now they were defeated without being able to pass the fort and coöperate with him. Grant found himself in mid-winter without shelter for his troops, investing an army as strong as his own and snugly housed in a fortress.

The event was to confirm that school of strategy opposed to dependence upon fortifications as destructive to the morale of the inclosed army. We have seen that the garrison at Fort Henry had retreated without offering any resistance; now the generals who were invested in Fort Donelson lost courage.

They had not moved out to meet the enemy in the open, nor had they taken a threatening position on the flank of the besieging force, leaving a garrison in occupation. They

were exactly where they wanted to be and were doing what had been planned for them by General Albert Sidney Johnston, their district commander, but when the event happened for which they had prepared, they could not endure it. Successful in the naval action, successful in such land fighting as had taken place, they thought only of escape!

Their plans to this end were well taken, and they were favored by fortune, for at the hour of their attack General Grant was absent from his army, on the flagship of Commodore Foote, who had asked an interview on board because he was wounded and unable to come ashore.

Early in the morning of the sixteenth, carrying provisions to last them on their contemplated retreat, twenty of the thirty regiments in the fort attacked McClernand's division which blocked the avenue of escape to Nashville. With their preponderance in numbers and with the moral advantage which comes at the outset of an attack, they threw the besiegers into considerable confusion, but in the effort of doing so they became confused and were unable either to press the attack or to take the road to Nashville.

Feb. 16,  
1862

General Grant, returning from the fleet, was informed by a terrified staff-officer of the catastrophe to his right flank. The moment had arrived when the men and their leaders had exhausted their stamina; when fate asked the question—would the general be carried away by the distress of his immediate surroundings, as so often happens, or would he overcome them by the force of his personality? Most battles are lost because the commanding general of the losing side gives up the fight. Armies seldom break away and leave their generals on the field.

Confronted with a ruined right wing, with disorganization and hysteria, there have been few generals who would not at least have withdrawn the injured division for reorganization and have left the initiative to the enemy. This would have been the easier way in Grant's case, because the only desire of the enemy was to escape. Such a result

would have been acceptable to Halleck, who would have claimed a victory from the capture of the fort, but it was not within the genius of Grant.

Encouraging the men with his calm and confident manner, ordering them to refill their cartridge-boxes, he gave the troops engaged the most effective orders to stop a retreat—to attack. The actions of officers and men are often the result of counter-pressures. Frequently men attacked by the enemy will retreat, even if doggedly, when ordered to hold their ground; but if ordered to attack in their turn, they will find a medium between the two pressures and stay in place.

Learning from the evidence about him that more than half of the garrison had engaged less than half of his troops, and that as the enemy had ceased to advance, the larger part of the Confederate forces must have been badly defeated, Grant realized that he retained in hand more than twice as many fresh troops as his enemy. Rallying his still disordered right flank as he rode, he returned to his left flank and ordered General Smith immediately to assault the fortifications in front of him.

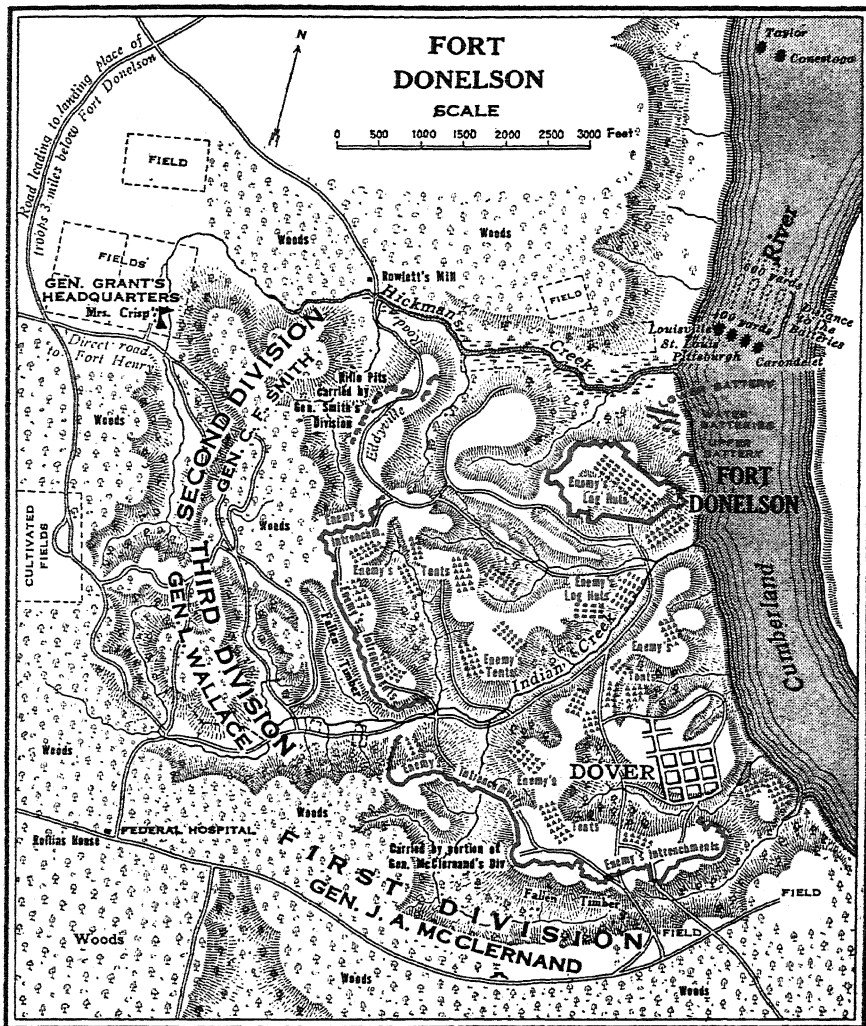
General Smith commanded the successful assault on horseback, penetrated into the center of the fort, and destroyed all hope on the part of the Confederate generals. Two generals, Floyd and Pillow, with some thousand soldiers escaped by steamer. A cavalry force under General Forrest retreated over a submerged road beyond reach of the Federal army. General Buckner, commanding the bulk of the Confederate army, then asked for terms.

In replying, Grant used the phraseology that gained him immediate nation-wide popularity: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works."

The terms were accepted.

Phrase-writers picked up the words "Unconditional Surrender," applied them to the initials "U. S." which bureau-







cracy had forced upon him at West Point, and hailed him as "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

Grant had now opened both the Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers to the heads of navigation and had captured an army of fifteen thousand men. Such a victory was utterly unforeseen on both sides. The whole Confederacy from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River lay open to the Northern armies, and Fort Columbus on the Mississippi was abandoned.

Anxious to exploit his victory and acting within his authority, Grant moved Smith's division to Clarksville on the Tennessee River, sent Nelson, who had arrived at Donelson by steamer with a division, on to Nashville without disembarking to meet the rest of Buell's army, and himself followed to Nashville—to become the victim of jealousies and hatreds which continued until after his death.

Feb. 21,  
1862

There came Buell, torn between anxiety for his own command, which was in no danger whatever, and jealousy of Grant's success. He first clashed with Grant when they met on a steamboat near Nashville, ordered Nelson's division back across the river and Smith's division, of Grant's army, to the same place, for the purpose of forming a line of defense against a beaten and demoralized enemy! His communication to Smith is an interesting contrast to Grant's letter to Buckner:

NASHVILLE,<sup>1</sup> February 25, 1862.

GENERAL C. F. SMITH,

*Commanding U. S. Forces, Clarksville.*

Feb. 25,  
1862

GENERAL: The landing of a portion of our troops, contrary to my intentions, on the south side of the river, has compelled me to hold this side at every hazard. If the enemy should assume the offensive,—and I am assured by reliable persons that, in view of my position, such is his intention,—my force present is altogether inadequate, consisting of only fifteen thousand men. I have to request you, therefore, to come forward with all the available force

<sup>1</sup> He was across the river from Nashville.

under your command. So important do I consider the occasion that I think it necessary to give this communication all the force of orders, and I send four boats, the *Diana*, *Woodford*, *John Rain*, and *Autocrat*, to bring you up. In five or six days my force will probably be sufficient to relieve you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. C. BUELL,

*Brigadier-General Comd'g.*

P. S.—The steamers will leave here at twelve o'clock tonight.<sup>2</sup>

Grant believed that after the fall of Fort Donelson it was possible for a general "in command of all the troops west of the Alleghenies, who would have taken the responsibility, to have marched to Chattanooga, Corinth, Memphis, and Vicksburg." The man to command the troops had produced himself, but to enable him to act it would have been necessary to remove Buell and Halleck and put a suitable officer in command at the rear to forward reinforcements and supplies. Such a man was Sherman at Paducah, but his capabilities were unknown and he was a man who could not rise by his own efforts. More than a year was to pass before Grant would be influential enough to raise him to high command.

But even if a commander for the rear had been found, aggressive and self-denying action on the part of McClellan would have been necessary to prevent the Confederate army in Virginia from converging upon Grant when he reached Chattanooga, and such action would not have been forthcoming.

Great military combinations can be made only when a suitable combination of officers has been assembled. There is no way of selecting them at the outset of war. They must find themselves, or a great leader must arise who will find his assistants, as Grant was to do.

The effect of the capture of Fort Donelson on the Confederacy was profound.

General Jordan, in his life of the Confederate cavalry

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, I, 263-64.

general, Forrest, who made his escape from Donelson, speaking of the operations against that stronghold and Fort Henry, says:

As it was, Grant, landing with the petty force of 15,000 in the very centre of a force of nearly 45,000, having interior lines for concentration and communication, by railway at that, was able to take two heavy fortifications in detail, and place *hors de combat* nearly 15,000 of his enemies.<sup>3</sup>

The biographer of General Albert Sidney Johnston says:

Mighty as was the disaster, its consequences on the minds of the parties to the civil strife were still more ominous to the Confederate cause. Where now were the impregnable fortifications said to be guarded by 100,000 desperate Southerners? Where now the boasted prowess of troops, who were to quail at no odds; where now the inexhaustible resources that were to defy all methods of approach? The screen was thrown down; the inherent weakness and poverty of the South were made manifest to all eyes; its vaunted valor was quelled, it was claimed, by inferior numbers and superior courage, and the prestige of the Confederate arms was transferred to their antagonists.<sup>4</sup>

In its instantaneous conception, its speed of execution, and importance of achievement the capture of Fort Henry is unequaled in military history. It was all of these because at Fort Donelson Grant was free to act. In every one of his future campaigns he was to come upon a stage set by others and was to work under more or less constant interference.

While Grant had been winning his great victory and moving troops forward to exploit it, Halleck had been letter-writing, first in panic that Grant might be beaten, to Halleck's disfavor, and then, when he learned of the victory, to steal the credit, pretending that he was directing Grant's victorious manœuvres. When Washington wanted details, Halleck of course could not give them. There was some inevitable delay and incompleteness in rendering reports of

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from William C. Church, *Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

two battles and a pursuit which promised to win the war, but no reasonable criticism could be based upon this delay. To Halleck, however, the lack of report was infuriating, even agonizing. Not only his incompetence, but his duplicity, was threatened with exposure, while the credit he had been intriguing for was perilously close to falling upon the man who deserved it.

Quick with the pen as he was slow with the sword, Halleck wrote to McClellan, March 2, 1862:

I have had no communication with General Grant for over a week. He left his command without my authority and went to Nashville. It is hard to censure a successful general immediately after a victory but I think he richly deserves it. I can get no returns, no reports, no information of any kind from him. Satisfied with his victory he sits down and enjoys it without any regard for the future.<sup>5</sup>

He had already telegraphed on February 19, 1862:

Smith, by his coolness and bravery at Fort Donelson, when the battle was against us, turned the tide and carried the enemy's outworks. Make him a Major-General. You can't get a better one. Honor him for this victory, and the whole country will applaud.<sup>6</sup>

And on February 20, 1862:

Must have command of the armies in the West. Hesitation and delay are losing us the golden opportunity. Lay this before the President and Secretary of War. May I resume the command? Answer quick.<sup>7</sup>

McClellan, who had organized and paraded for six months while refraining from a dreaded contact with the enemy, was in a receptive mood when Halleck's letter reached him. His immediate subordinates had given him no cause for jealousy, but now suddenly the obscure Brigadier-General of Volunteers Grant—but also the dashing, smashing Lieutenant Grant of Monterey and San Cosme—had shattered the entire Confederate line of defense west of the Alle-

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, I, 60.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 53.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

ghenies, captured forts and armies, and had won a victory whose transcendent importance was recognized in the capitals of Europe. This upstart must be crushed.

Replied McClellan:

March 3, 1862. Your despatch of last evening received. The success of our cause demands that proceedings such as Grant's should be at once checked. Do not hesitate to arrest him at once if the good of the service requires it, and place C. F. Smith in command. You are at liberty to regard this as a positive order if it will smooth your way.<sup>8</sup>

Halleck again wrote, on March 4th:

A rumor has just reached me that since the taking of Fort Donelson Grant has resumed his former bad habits. If so it will account for his repeated neglect of my oft-repeated orders. I do not deem it advisable to arrest him at present, but have placed General Smith in command of the expedition up the Tennessee. I think Smith will restore order and discipline.<sup>9</sup>

In accord with his chief, Halleck could now write to Grant as he did on March 6th:

General McClellan directs that you report to me daily the number and position of the forces under your command. Your neglect of repeated orders has created great dissatisfaction and seriously interfered with military plans. Your going to Nashville without authority was a matter of serious complaint at Washington, so much so that I was advised to arrest you on your return.<sup>10</sup>

He then ordered Grant to place General Smith in command of a new expedition up the Tennessee River to Eastport and himself to remain at Fort Henry.

If Grant had been entirely subject to the official hierarchy, his end might have come then. Halleck had tried to give the credit for the victory to Smith and have him made major-general, but it was Grant whom the Secretary of War

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from Louis A. Coolidge, *Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, I, 61.

recommended for the promotion, whom the President appointed, and the Senate confirmed.

He was recognized as the victor in a great battle, and exultant soldiers were writing eulogies of their triumphant general. The slogan of his name rang through the country, and the Illinois delegation in Congress wanted to know why its general was disgraced. In consequence, the adjutant-general wrote to Halleck on March 10th:

Mar. 10,  
1862

It has been reported that soon after the battle of Fort Donelson, Brigadier-General Grant left his command without leave. By direction of the President, the Secretary of War desires you to ascertain and report whether General Grant left his command at any time without proper authority, and if so, for how long; whether he has made to you proper reports and returns of his force; whether he has committed any acts which were unauthorized or not in accordance with military subordination or propriety, and if so, what.<sup>11</sup>

Halleck's reply was a clever backdown, saying he had restored Grant to his rightful command on the thirteenth.

What McClelland, who had carried on for hours while Grant was on the gunboat, may have written, or what Lew Wallace, who had displayed a marvelous combination of discipline, generalship, and initiative, may have said, favorable or unfavorable, I do not know.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from A. L. Conger, *The Rise of U. S. Grant*, p. 209.



## CHAPTER IV

### SHILOH

WHILE Grant was in disgrace the army was moved up the Tennessee River to attack Corinth. When he returned to command on March 17th he found that General Smith had disposed his troops in extraordinary dispersion, with three divisions, his own, now commanded by General W. H. L. Wallace, McClelland's, and Prentiss's at Savannah on the east side of the river; Lew Wallace's at Crump's Landing; and Sherman's and Hurlbut's at Pittsburg Landing on the west bank.

Mar. 17,  
1862

This last camp had been occupied at the suggestion of General Sherman, who, in command of a new division, had been sent toward Burnsville to cut the railroad east of Corinth and, being turned back by heavy rain at Eastport, had been shown this place, the established landing for traffic between Corinth and the north. He wrote to Grant on the day of the latter's arrival:

I have just returned from a reconnaissance towards Corinth and Purdy, and am strongly impressed with the importance of this position. The ground itself admits of easy defense by a small command and yet affords admirable camping grounds for 100,000 men.<sup>1</sup>

Mar. 19,  
1862

Grant's problem then arose. Should he advance his troops from Savannah to Pittsburg Landing or withdraw those at Pittsburg Landing to Savannah? More than the tactical situation as outlined by Sherman was involved. It would improve that intangible and invaluable quality, the morale of his army, to move forward; to retreat would numb it. Other Union armies were so benumbed throughout the war. As we shall see later, Grant carried out his only re-

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, I, 261.

treat in four years so calmly as to improve his troops' courage.

Mar. 22,  
1862

*But Grant did not pick Pittsburg Landing as a camp-site for his army. He moved the rear fragment of the army Smith had divided to the site Sherman had chosen.* His action was to concentrate his troops by moving those at Savannah to Pittsburg Landing, accepting the spot recommended by Sherman, which had already been approved by his other trusted comrade, General Smith. In order not to overburden the inadequate facilities of Pittsburg Landing, he left General Lew Wallace at Crump's Landing four miles away in a semi-independent command, for which Wallace's promptness in advancing from Henry and his skill at Donelson indicated he was well fitted.

The following day Grant notified Halleck of his intention to move on Corinth on the twenty-third or twenty-fourth. Not wanting Grant to win another Donelson, Halleck replied: "Corinth cannot be taken without a general engagement which, from your instructions, is to be avoided." Whereupon Grant wrote to Smith, whom he wished to use as commander of the camp, "Carry out your idea of occupying, and particularly of fortifying, Pea Ridge," and devoted himself to organizing his army and his line of supplies and preparing for the arrival of General Buell marching from Columbia eighty-five miles away and therefore to be expected within a week.

Grant's desire to have General Smith command the troops at Pittsburg Landing was frustrated, first by Smith's illness, which led to his death three weeks later, and then by the promotion of McClernand to the rank of major-general and his claim to command in Grant's absence. The right of the senior officer to command in the absence of a designated superior is indispensable to avoid chaos but is frequently a serious embarrassment when that officer is not in the confidence of his commander, as was the case with McClernand.

Grant attempted to surmount his difficulty by leaving

Sherman at the front of the camp on the right of the line, with generals junior to him on his left, so that Sherman would command the contacts with the enemy and with Crump's Landing. He established an advanced base at Pittsburg Landing for himself to retain command of the army, and spent part of the day organizing his troops and getting into contact with his advance echelons and the rest of the time at his bases and his supply system.

Smith did not fortify Pea Ridge, as ordered, and Lieutenant-Colonel McPherson, an engineer officer who had graduated first in his class at West Point in 1853 and was therefore at the height of his young manhood, and who had served, to Grant's great approval, at Fort Donelson, reported that the only suitable line for intrenchment was in the rear of the present camps and that the ground to be protected was remote from water and therefore unsuitable for camp-sites.

By "intrenchments" McPherson meant formal fortifications. Neither he nor Sherman nor Grant nor Smith yet knew anything about field-works,<sup>2</sup> which were to be invented by the soldiers.

Grant thought his main command amply strong to repel any attack and did not expect one there, but prepared to reinforce Wallace's division at Crump's Landing, which he thought might be selected for surprise assault because of its small garrison and its isolation. On April 1st the Confederate cavalry began skirmishing with the Union outposts, and on the fourth captured a picket of six men from

April 1,  
1862

<sup>2</sup> After reading this chapter Mr. C. L. Raymond asked me: "Why shouldn't they have known? Montcalm at Ticonderoga used a shallow trench and felled trees as an abatis. The almost unconquerable intrenchment at Breed's hill was done by colonial spades between ten at night and morning. Montcalm knew everything you give the soldiers of the Civil War armies credit for inventing. The Black Watch died in front of hastily constructed field-works at Ticonderoga. Why Montcalm met Wolfe in a clear-field duel on the Plains of Abraham is a mystery. He knew so well the art of digging in." The answer is that General C. F. Smith, Grant's commandant at West Point, disbelieved in them and taught a military theory which was preponderant until the World War, that field-works sapped the courage of the troops. Certainly Grant's experience at forts Henry and Donelson had substantiated this theory.

Sherman's command. Grant was at the front on that evening, investigating the cause of the firing.

April 5,  
1862

On the fifth, General Nelson arrived at Savannah—the same General Nelson who had come to Fort Donelson after the surrender and whom Grant had used to occupy Nashville to the great irritation of General Buell. Nelson had been seventeen days covering eighty-five miles and was willing to push on to a point opposite Pittsburg Landing, but Grant wished to spare his men the discomfort of a camp on its swampy ground and stopped them at Savannah, where he himself spent the night in order to meet General Buell the following morning. Buell had arrived that day but did not report to his senior officer—probably because he wished to retain his independent command as long as possible and because he still resented Grant's victory at Donelson and his greater enterprise before Nashville, which had relegated Buell to a position inferior both to Halleck, his former equal, and to Grant, his former inferior.

April 5,  
1862

The question naturally arises—why did a man of Grant's aggressive temperament allow the Confederates to harass his lines from the first to the fifth of April without advancing and driving them back? The answer is—his positive orders from Halleck not to bring on a general engagement. He had nearly ruined himself by showing enterprise in going to Nashville, and he knew that an advance beyond his picket-lines would sign the order for his removal.

Sherman, who was commanding at the front, has been greatly criticized for his blindness to the coming storm, a criticism more applicable to the Sherman of 1864 than to the Sherman of 1862. Before Shiloh, Sherman's only contact with the realities of war had been at Bull Run, where the army in which he served had marched out to catastrophe; in an organizing command in Ohio, where his prescience of the military future was marred by his incapacity to adjust himself to his surroundings; in forwarding troops to Grant at Donelson; and in his retreat before

a rain-storm at Eastport before occupying Pittsburg Landing.

Sherman had laid out his camps in line of battle and had established his pickets according to the rules of "security" laid down in the regulations. He seconded his superior in disbelief that the enemy would advance twenty miles over muddy roads to attack so large an encampment, and he gave expression to that complete self-confidence which is so valuable in battle but perhaps not so valuable a day or two before. Very likely his inexperience had compelled him to assume an "old-soldier bluntness."

However, Johnston's army, having marched from Corinth in three days and having camped within sound of the Union bugles, attempted to rush the Union camps at daybreak of April 6th. The pickets were unable to make any serious resistance, but the noise of their firing brought all Union troops from their tents and their breakfast-tables into formation on the parade-grounds.

April 6,  
1862

Ever since that morning the controversy has been unsettled as to whether or not the Union army was surprised, and the argument will go on as long as the Battle of Shiloh is remembered, because the dispute is not so much one of fact as one of definition. There have been cases where the surprised soldiers have been caught in bed; the chief protagonists of the anti-Grant school have claimed that Grant's soldiers were so caught, but the evidence does not bear this out in the least.

On the other hand, Grant frankly admits he did not expect to be attacked, though he believed himself prepared for the eventuality. To this extent he was surprised. Undoubtedly Sherman's raw troops, aroused by the sound of musketry and hurriedly assembled in formation, were not as mentally prepared for the agony of battle as they would have been if Sherman had been able to assemble his colonels and warn them of the coming attack, and if the latter had done the same to the company officers, and these to the

April 6,  
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troops. Sherman certainly was surprised in the sense that he had not prepared his men for the blow that was to fall.

Perhaps it was well for Sherman that he was experienced in defeat, for the immediate breaking of some of his regiments and brigades did not dismay him. He remained on horseback with those that stood fast, a courage-giving hero, and promptly sent the necessary messages to the divisions on his flank to form and to the divisions in the rear to come to his assistance.

The camp formation had been so well planned that the troops in the rear readily reinforced the battle-line, General McClernand moving at the request of General Sherman, and Colonel McPherson of Grant's staff, acting for the commander-in-chief, directing the rest. The enemy were not stopped, but while the retreat of some of the men and organizations was panicky, the firing-line merely drifted back.

In the days of the legion and the phalanx, to retreat was to court disaster; but after firearms were invented it was no embarrassment at all for musketeers to retire so long as they retained their morale, for thus they could avoid contact with superior numbers and keep the advancing bayonets longer under fire. With the arrival of the muzzle-loading rifle, the mobility of infantry reached its zenith because the men could reload their weapons while moving but could not do so when lying down, as they could after the introduction of breech-loaders. Musketry manuals often provided that soldiers who had fired their pieces should retire to reload behind those who had not, and that the files should march around a central point, keeping the body of the troops stationary.

It is easy to perceive that such an evolution, whether by command or not, would easily develop to the point where the men with the empty pieces would retire, and the men who had reloaded their guns would only stay in place, causing a general retirement of the whole.

Under these conditions a fixed mark was almost indis-

pensable to hold the troops in place. In the absence of formal parapets and trenches, breastworks, making the front line appear safer than the rear, developed great value, but walls, fences, railroads, and hedges came more and more to be the places of resistance; even wagon-roads, affording no protection whatever, would enable retreating troops to stop, as in the case of Wadsworth's brigade in the Battle of the Wilderness.

The necessity for such a standing line was not yet understood, and in consequence the retirement at Shiloh took place in the manner indicated.

Grant heard the sounds of battle at Savannah and, leaving written orders for General Nelson to march immediately to a point opposite Pittsburg Landing, steamed in his river-boat to Crump's Landing. Learning there that the attack was on his main encampment, he told General Lew Wallace to be prepared to march to Pittsburg Landing on receipt of orders.

April 6,  
1862

The sight that greeted him at Pittsburg Landing was worse than he had seen at Donelson. At the former place he had passed two divisions of well-formed regiments before he came upon the broken troops on the right flank. Here he came first upon the men who had fled the battle-front and who were now hiding from fire under the river-bank. This sight, new to a man whose entire war experience had been on the firing-line, did not discourage him. Remembering his experience at Monterey as well as at Fort Donelson, he immediately formed an ammunition train to supply the firing-line. He then went to Sherman and approved the latter's disposition to hold the bridge over Snake Creek by which Wallace's division was expected.

Then, moving along the line of troops, he found Prentiss, with whom he had had bitter arguments over seniority early in the war, and gave him the order to maintain his position at all hazards. Whether he did so because he doubted Prentiss's resolution or because he appreciated the great value of the position Prentiss held, we do not know. We

do know that Prentiss carried out his instructions. The woods he held became "the strong point" on which the Confederate attacks were broken, and it went down in history as the "hornet's nest."

Toward evening, attacked on three sides, with no hope of relief, short of ammunition, thirsty and weary, what was left of the division, twenty-four hundred strong, surrendered.

If Prentiss had died that day, his name would have become immortal. If he had been able to resist till dark, he would have been hailed as the victor of Shiloh, with what promotion and future career none can say. As it was, he resigned from the army a year and a half later.



Smith's fate was more favorable to his fame. The man who had left Grant an army straddled across a river wide and deep and who inveighed against breastworks as destroying courage—a doctrine taught in some military schools for another fifty years—died shortly after the battle as the result of a minor accident. To this day he is extolled as a great soldier who would have shaded Sherman and even Grant. If he had lived, he would have been man enough to claim his responsibility and exonerate his chief, as Sherman lived to do.

During the anxious hours when Sherman and McClelland fought in retreat and Prentiss held fast in the "hornet's nest," Grant constantly supervised the munition supply; moved troops into line; sent more than once for Wallace and Nelson; despatched transports for Wood, who had arrived at Savannah with another division of Buell's army; and everywhere showed that calm, untroubled exterior which made him the master of all the battle-fields.

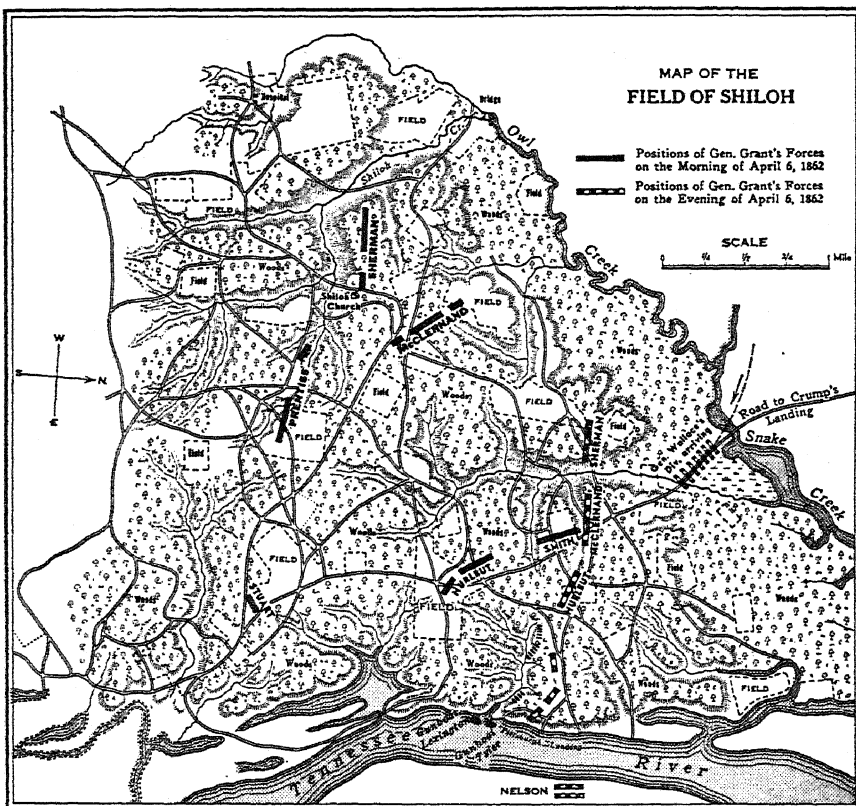
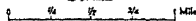
He could not direct any counter-offensive, as at Donelson, because Johnston had attacked all along the line and had engaged all of Grant's troops, front line and reserve. His nearby forces—Wallace's and Nelson's—failed to arrive. Outwardly he did not weaken, but by one communica-



# MAP OF THE FIELD OF SHILOH

-  Positions of Gen. Grant's Forces on the Morning of April 6, 1862
-  Positions of Gen. Grant's Forces on the Evening of April 6, 1862

SCALE





tion he showed a greater anxiety than in any other of his battles. To Buell he wrote:

PITTSBURG, April 6, 1862

April 6,  
1862

GENERAL: The attack on my forces has been very spirited since early this morning. The appearance of fresh troops on the field now would have a powerful effect, both by inspiring our men and disheartening the enemy. If you will get upon the field, leaving all your baggage on the east bank of the river, it will be a move to our advantage, and possibly save the day to us. The rebel forces are estimated at over one hundred thousand men. My headquarters will be in the log-building on the top of the hill, where you will be furnished a staff-officer to guide you to your place on the field.<sup>3</sup>

Upon untterrified men, armed with rifles, attacks cannot prevail. Enough of the Union army remained steadfast, and, firing continuously, they slowed down and finally stopped the Confederate attack, though only by a narrow margin on the left flank, where Grant massed several batteries of artillery in support of his shaken infantry. It was then that he rejoined Sherman and said that when two armies had fought to exhaustion the first to resume the attack would win. That was how he had won at Donelson, and he gave orders to his army and to Buell to attack at daylight all along the line.

That night Nelson, Wood, Crittenden, and McCook joined Buell, who had arrived on the battle-field the day before, and were placed on the left, and Wallace came in on the right flank.

The second day of Shiloh was a day of Union attack all along the line, in which the reinforcements of unengaged troops gave them all the advantage. The Confederates fought in retreat back to the Union camps and then streamed back rapidly to Corinth.

April 7,  
1862

It is not unusual to run across the claim, so familiar in lost battles, that if the Confederate General Johnston had not been killed he would have turned the future of the war.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from A. L. Conger, *The Rise of U. S. Grant*, pp. 248-49.

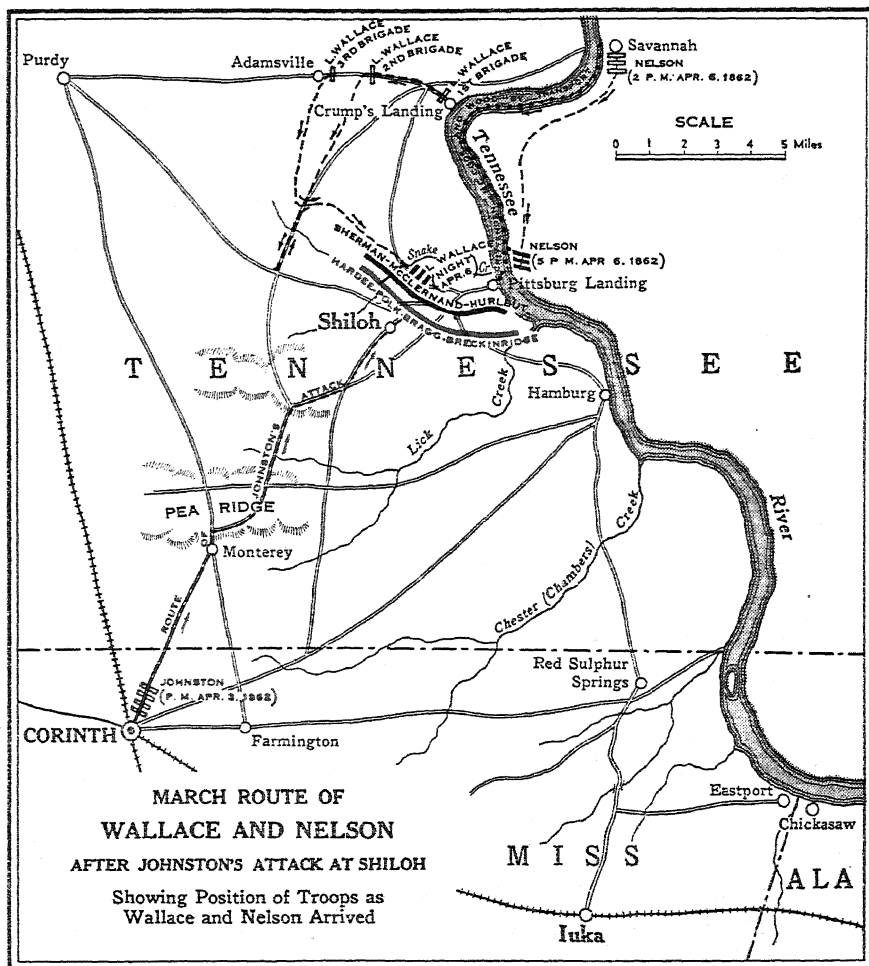
But such claims never mention that Grant fought both days badly crippled from a fall of his horse, that his principal lieutenant, General Smith, was absent from the field, and that that general's successor, W. H. Wallace, was killed in the battle.

There are similarities to be found in Grant's first three principal battles: new troops did not stand firmly against attack. Where they could retreat freely, they regained their courage; where they found retreat cut off by a river, they became panic-stricken. In all three battles the situations that were presented to Grant broke the morale of most generals in the war, but he surmounted them.

Colonel A. L. Conger has likened Shiloh to the Battle of Marengo. To me, Waterloo is a more intriguing simile. In each, the attacker sought victory before the reinforcing army could come to the assistance of the defender. In each, the tactics of the attacker have been criticized, though for opposite reasons: Johnston for throwing in his troops all at once; Napoleon for frittering his away in dribblets. In each battle the defending general had troops unengaged on his right flank. Grant's did not come into action until the second day; Wellington's not at all. If we mix our similes slightly, we may liken the marching and counter-marching of Lew Wallace to the futile manœuvres of D'Erlon between Quatre Bras and Ligny.

Grant's despatch to Buell may be compared to Wellington's prayer for "Blücher or night." Both generals were accused of being surprised, and Grant could have replied, as did Wellington: "Well, what if I was surprised; I beat him, didn't I." Gneisenau completed the defeat of the French by an all-night pursuit, but Buell did nothing of the kind to the Confederates. Both battles demonstrate the the uncertainties of plans to "assemble on the battle-field."

There is also an important contrast between Shiloh and Waterloo. At Shiloh, neither army was fatigued by previous battle. At Waterloo, Wellington and his allied host were





fresh, but Napoleon and his army were much worn from the strain of the Battle of Ligny.

The simile to Waterloo goes beyond the events of the battle.\* Like Napoleon, Johnston was fighting for much more than possession of a battle-field. He had planned to beat Grant and, after him, Buell. After a second victory he would recover Tennessee and "neutral" Kentucky, and the states north of the Ohio would be open to him. It was a great stake he lost when Grant held the Army of the Tennessee together all the day of April 6, 1862.

A great deal of criticism has been voiced by the failure of victorious generals in the Civil War to pursue the enemy, Grant being no less severe on others than his critics have been of him. These criticisms seem to me to be exaggerated. Pursuit of the defeated was most effective in the days of phalanxes, which could not escape after defeat. They were still effective in Europe when foot-soldiers were armed with short-range, slow-loading guns, uncertain of fire; when foot-soldiers were mere clods, without self-respect or self-confidence, incapable of individual action. But the English regulars, even when victorious in battle, were never successful in pursuing the Continentals.

With the Civil War came a gun much quicker to reload, a surer one to fire, and of greatly increased range. Retreating troops, unless panic-stricken—and they were not often panic-stricken—were always dangerous and generally effective in stopping pursuit when it was attempted. In the World War, on all fronts, the soldiers were not as enterprising individually as the soldiers of the Civil War, but the weapons were still more effective and pursuit was not successful.

Fort Donelson had begun with an initial reverse, like Shiloh, and, like Shiloh, ended in a great victory. But while Donelson almost destroyed Grant by the jealousy aroused

\* Wellington was attending a ball in Brussels when Napoleon struck. Grant was at his base bringing up reinforcements when Johnston attacked,

from recognized brilliancy of his achievement, Shiloh nearly destroyed him because of alleged shortcomings. In both he was absent when the battle broke out, and in both he restored a losing battle after he returned.

The men who had run away at Donelson ran into the woods. They were not recognized, and returned to their ranks glad to cover up their defections. The men who ran away at Shiloh were packed together under the river-bank, known to all, their reputations and their self-respect destroyed. They needed, oh, how much excuse for their conduct!

Buell and the Army of the Ohio had been put in the shade by Grant and his Army of the Tennessee at Donelson, and Buell had cut a sorry figure after it. The worse the condition of the Army of the Tennessee could be made out, the greater the glory to Buell in restoring the battle.

McClelland, who kept a larger number of troops on the firing-line than any other division-commander, was no doubt anxious to exploit his achievement; and Lew Wallace, bitterly and wrongfully accused by Grant's staff for his failure to arrive on the sixth, returned that criticism and added that he had obtained information of the coming attack which was not acted upon. McClellan and Halleck, in higher circles, glad to traduce the only general who threatened their supremacy in the direction of war, added their voices to the chorus.

A. K. McClure, in his volume *Lincoln and Men of War Times*, records the wave of antagonism to Grant. He says that he advised Lincoln that public opinion would not allow him to retain Grant in command, and that Lincoln replied: "I cannot spare this man; he fights," and ordered Halleck, Grant's senior officer, to Shiloh to assume command by seniority, thus avoiding the question of removing Grant.

If Grant had been continued in command, he would have followed the beaten troops into Corinth, occupied Memphis, and moved on a broad front along two railroads to Jackson and Vicksburg.



Vicksburg would have been taken in 1862 instead of 1863.

The imagination may run at will as to what might have happened after that. He might have marched through Chattanooga to Atlanta, or to the latter place via Mobile! Such campaigns only take place in dream-book histories written about semi-mythological characters like Alexander and Genghis Khan. Real world events follow misunderstandings and setbacks such as Grant had to overcome.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN OF 1862

**W**HEN Halleck arrived at Pittsburg Landing he brought the Army of the Mississippi, which had captured Island No. 10 two days after the victory of Shiloh, to Hamburg, four miles from Pittsburg Landing. He organized an army of more than one hundred thousand men in three wings, with General Thomas from Buell's army in command of the larger part of the Army of the Tennessee on the right, Buell commanding his own army in the center, and Pope commanding the Army of the Mississippi on the left. McClernand commanded the reserve. Grant was named second in command, with some color of authority over the right flank and the reserve, composed of his own troops.

April 11,  
1862

General Halleck advanced his large army with great caution on Corinth, to the scorn of Grant, whose military genius and temperament were all for speedy movements, but not so much to the scorn of Sherman, as we shall see later.

May 30,  
1862

General Halleck occupied Corinth on May 30th, fifty-three days after the battle of Shiloh. There is no reason to doubt that if Grant had been left in command of his own and Buell's armies he would have taken the city forty days sooner.

In the West, Thomas's victory at Mill Springs had been overshadowed by Grant's at Henry and Donelson, which had brought about the evacuation of Bowling Green and Nashville and led to the victory of Pea Ridge in Missouri. Corinth had fallen as the result of Shiloh, and Island No. 10 had been captured. The principal victories were Grant's, but Halleck obtained the credit, was promoted, in consequence, to commander-in-chief of all the armies, and then

offered the command of the Army of the Mississippi to Colonel Allen.

Not until that officer refused it was Grant put in command and called back to Corinth from Memphis, where, after Sherman had persuaded him not to leave the army, he had gone to avoid the humiliation of his position under Halleck.

July 11,  
1862

Buell, who had been a rival at the time of Donelson and an ungracious subordinate at Shiloh, was sent with his army to occupy Chattanooga. Now placed on his own responsibility, he was manœvered and frightened by the Confederate General Bragg all the way back to Louisville and Cincinnati, was relieved after the unsuccessful battle of Perryville, and only lived thereafter to vent his spleen on his triumphant comrade-in-arms.<sup>1</sup>

Aug 23-  
Sept. 25,  
1862

At Corinth Grant had three duties to perform: to prevent the population in the occupied portions of Tennessee and Mississippi from helping the rebellion; to hold the ground he had taken; and to prevent reinforcements going from his front to Bragg. He accomplished them all, and with constantly depleted forces.

Oct. 8,  
1862

In order to do so he refortified Corinth, garrisoned it with a division and a brigade, and disposed the rest of the troops belonging to his left flank and center in detachments along the railroads centering in Corinth. The troops were kept well in hand and were connected by telegraph with Grant's headquarters at Corinth. Sherman, already Grant's favorite lieutenant, held Memphis, a semi-independent command, as it was beyond the telegraph lines, and communicated with headquarters by a roundabout river and railroad route.

July,  
1862

The rôle of defense was uncongenial to Grant but good practice for the general, staff, and troops, all of whom were constantly on the move, engaged in instructive operations varying from skirmishes to small battles.

He was much annoyed during this period by merchants

<sup>1</sup> His story in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* is a masterpiece of hate.

who entered his command by Presidential order to buy cotton. From his point of view they enriched the enemy, disorganized his soldiers, and gave away military secrets. It does not appear that the general was told by the State Department that cotton exported from the North paid for war supplies, eased the pressure of English cotton manufacturers for intervention, and lessened blockade-running. Departments of government are always jealous of one another and seldom coöperate.

It was at this time that Grant came face to face with the slavery question.

Theoretically, the war was being conducted to preserve the nation, formed under the terms of the Constitution which protected slavery. While the war was being carried on in Missouri and Kentucky, this view was stressed in order to encourage the slavery sympathizers in those states to cleave to the Union, but when Grant's victories at Henry, Donelson, and Shiloh carried it into Mississippi, a new situation arose. The white inhabitants were all enemies. The slaves' labor was used for the rebellion and was available for its suppression. The problem presented itself to Grant in the persons of hordes of blacks within his lines. He employed them to pick cotton which he confiscated and sold, and he paid the slaves from the proceeds.

Aug. 23-  
Sept. 25,  
1862

August  
29-30,  
1862

While Grant, the winner of the war's only victories, was holding his gains in the West, retribution came upon his supplanters; Buell was driven rapidly back to Louisville in the center, and Halleck and Pope in the East were overwhelmingly defeated at the Second Battle of Bull Run.

Aug. 14,  
1862

Grant's army was now seriously depleted. He was required to send four divisions to aid Buell, two on August 14th, one on September 4th, and one on September 19th, the day set for the Battle of Iuka. One division had already been sent to Arkansas. With these troops went three of the war's famous soldiers—Thomas, Granger, and Sheridan, of whom, to be sure, Grant admired only Sheridan,

Thus weakened, he conducted the only successful campaign of the autumn and won the only victories for the Union. On September 17th, while the Confederate General Van Dorn was threatening Corinth from the south, Grant learned that General Price had occupied Iuka on his extreme left to support Bragg. Grant acted immediately, not to repel, but to destroy the latter by the manœuver known as "double envelopment."

Sept. 17,  
1862

Bringing one division from Memphis to Bolivar to stiffen his center, he moved ten thousand men under General Ord by railroad from their camps around Bolivar and Jackson through Corinth and detrained them at Burnsville with orders to move upon Iuka on the morning of the nineteenth. General Rosecrans, who marched from Corinth, was ordered to attack along both the Jacinto-Iuka and the Fulton-Iuka roads at the same time. Detachments were left to cover Corinth and the rear of the armies, while railroad trains were kept at Burnsville nearby, ready to move Ord's command back to Corinth in the event it should be attacked by Van Dorn.

The plan, an excellent example of economy of forces and double envelopment, was suggested by Rosecrans, who had commanded Iuka and knew the country well. Grant had the courage to accept the whole risk it involved and to order its execution.

Ord moved promptly, but Rosecrans found more and more obstacles to his advance and more causes for delay, as most men do when they approach the enemy; he came up late and so spoiled the plan of simultaneous attack. Attacking alone and only along the Jacinto road—for he had lost courage to spread his command over both roads—the head of his column was driven in, and the enemy escaped by the unguarded road to Fulton.

Sept. 19,  
1862

Plans of battle are easily made, but other factors than road distances and administration enter into the execution. Here, as afterwards, Rosecrans was morally unable to carry out his excellent mental calculations.

Grant was on the defensive, pinned to the ground for lack of troops when the Confederate General Van Dorn, early in October, joined by the troops of Lovell, Price, and Villepigue, began a well-conceived movement to destroy Grant's left flank, now drawn back to Corinth. First concentrating before Bolivar to draw Grant's strength from the point to be attacked, then feinting for the Mississippi above Memphis, he placed his force between Corinth and the troops at Memphis and struck at Corinth.

Oct. 4,  
1862

Again Grant aimed at annihilation, and again Rosecrans, shirking, foiled him. He ordered Rosecrans to hold fortified Corinth and to assume the offensive as soon as the enemy assault failed, and directed Ord to come from Bolivar and McPherson from Jackson to close the trap.

Rosecrans successfully held his trenches. As with the ordinary soldier, it is easier for the ordinary general to hold a fixed post than to force himself to advance over open country, but after repulsing the attack he did not advance.

The order for Rosecrans to advance was repeated, but although McPherson's approach had forced Van Dorn to cease his assaults, and his subsequent arrival had furnished reinforcements to facilitate the move, Rosecrans delayed twenty-four hours and then took the wrong direction.

Ord blocked the retreating army at Davis's Bridge and again did his share to carry out Grant's plan. If Rosecrans had been able to force himself into battle, he would have captured Van Dorn's force. He had quailed when he should have attacked, and when the enemy had got clear of him he wrote eloquently asking permission to pursue deep into the Confederacy. Long after the war he enlarged upon what he would have accomplished if he had not been deterred. A year later he moved into the Confederacy to the catastrophe of Chickamauga and became a second Buell decrying a more successful general.

Oct. 4,  
1862

Ord's attack at Davis's Bridge, however, turned the Confederate defeat into a rout. Grant was about to remove Rosecrans from command for his second defection, but Halleck

recognized him as the victor of the campaign and appointed him to succeed Buell in command of the Army of the Cumberland.

Grant, however, was soon after promoted to command of the District of the Tennessee and involved in the politico-military contest with General McClelland which was to lead to the most serious repulse and the most brilliant victory of his career.

Oct. 25,  
1862

Grant, now stronger after the victory of Corinth than the enemy in his sector, which extended from the Cumberland River to the Mississippi, immediately planned to advance. His first purpose was the modest one of occupying additional territory, but with the arrival of more troops at Memphis he enlarged this to the capture of Vicksburg.

From Cairo south the Mississippi River flows in its own delta; that is, it flows over soil it has deposited from erosions of the upper Mississippi, the Missouri, the Ohio, and other tributaries. The river itself, always navigable, is extremely winding, frequently changing its channel and leaving lakes or bayous. The nearby country is lower than the river itself, and at that time was swampy, thick, and difficult to penetrate. On the east shore no dry land bordered the river between Memphis and Vicksburg. Grant had now conquered the Mississippi River south to Vicksburg, and Farragut had cleared it north to Port Hudson, so that these forts alone obstructed the great waterway from its mouth to its source and were of great military importance in blocking the river to traffic and in protecting a corridor through which the Confederates communicated with Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, obtained men and supplies from those states, and war materials from Europe delivered through the unblockaded parts of Mexico.

Although Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Clarksville, and Nashville had been captured from the river side, and the Battle of Shiloh had been fought at Pittsburg Landing, the river-port of Corinth, Grant's first plan was for an overland advance.

The move to Corinth of only twenty miles had taken an army of more than a hundred thousand men fifty-seven days, yet Grant now proposed to march overland one hundred and fifty miles to Jackson with an army of only thirty thousand men and "pinch out" Vicksburg, another river-fort to which he could have access by the Mississippi. He would have strengthened his moving force by adding to it certain garrisons in the occupied territory, but Halleck ordered him to keep these troops scattered.

The reasons for his change in tactics were, first, the difficulty of an attack upon the water-front of Vicksburg, a position of great strength towering over the river and flanked by almost impenetrable marshes; and second, the necessity of holding the conquests in Tennessee and Alabama. An advance along this front, if successful, would hold his lines while he outflanked the fortress. We will find him reverting to the same principle in Virginia.

Grant accordingly ordered a move over two roads from Memphis and Holly Springs. He brought Sherman with three divisions down the destroyed railroad from Memphis to Cottage Hill, while he himself turned the enemy's works on the Tallahatchie River with cavalry and followed as far as Oxford. He was now diverted from further development of this plan by information that General McClernand had so far interested President Lincoln in an attack on Vicksburg down the Mississippi River that the latter was about to place McClernand in command of a river expedition.

General McClernand belonged to that section of the Democratic party which had been won to Jefferson by the acquisition of Louisiana. To all the states contiguous to the Mississippi River and its tributaries the free navigation of the river to its mouth was the principal reason for adhering to the Union cause. Their leader, Stephen A. Douglas, had rallied the Democrats of Illinois to its support by arguing that if the principle established when the Confederates installed a custom-house at Memphis should be

Nov. 29,  
1862



allowed to stand, other custom-houses would be placed east and west, and with Canada on the north, Illinois would be imprisoned.

This doctrine was also strongly held in the northwestern states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. In this interest, rather than in abolition of slavery or tariff disputes, McClelland had thrown his influential lot to the Union cause. Now he considered himself responsible to his followers for the early opening of the river.

He had coöperated in all the military movements, freeing Missouri, Kentucky, and western Tennessee of rebel troops. Therefore, when Halleck stopped all progress down the Mississippi River after the occupation of Corinth and sent his moving armies eastward, McClelland went to Washington to obtain permission to raise an army from the population to whom the opening of the Mississippi was paramount and to command it in a river attack upon Vicksburg.

He had fought bravely at Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, and Shiloh. He had observed the Eastern and Ohio armies inevitably defeated under the command of West Point graduates and had seen Grant disgraced by Halleck. Whatever others may think of his pretensions, he thought himself qualified to command a river attack upon Vicksburg. He obtained permission to raise troops for this purpose, did raise them—forty thousand of them—and was commissioned by Lincoln to command the river expedition. McClelland's instructions read:

Oct. 21, 1862

Ordered, that Major-General McClelland be, and he is directed to proceed to the states of Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, to organize the troops remaining in those states and to be raised by volunteering or draft, and forward them with all dispatch to Memphis, Cairo, or such other points as may hereafter be designated by the General-in-Chief, to the end that, when a sufficient force, not required by the operations of General Grant's command, shall be raised, an expedition may be organized under General McClelland's command,

against Vicksburg, and to clear the Mississippi river and open navigation to New Orleans.

Indorsement: This order, though marked "confidential," may be shown by General McClelland to governors, and even others, when, in his discretion, he believes so doing to be indispensable to the progress of the expedition. I add, that I feel deep interest in the success of the expedition, and desire it to be pushed forward with all possible dispatch, consistently with the other parts of the military service.

A. LINCOLN <sup>2</sup>

His claims were supported in principle by Admiral Porter, who had said in Washington that he wished to make the Mississippi expedition in collaboration with a volunteer general, as he resented the superior pretensions of the West Pointers.<sup>3</sup> As Annapolis had not been established until 1845, the high-ranking naval officers were not graduates and seemingly were subject to invidious treatment by the West Point generals. In return they endeavored to influence the assignment and removal of these generals by their reports to the Secretary of the Navy, passed on to the Secretary of War.

Joint operations were frequent in the Civil War. In conducting them, neither army nor navy would subordinate itself, always succeeded in avoiding the military principle of unity of command, and conducted their joint projects with general success. I believe this unmilitary relationship continues to the present time in all countries except Spain, where unity of command has always been maintained—disastrously. There is as much error in military dogmas as in others.

McClelland even had in mind a general idea of the attack from the south which Grant was to carry out so brilliantly. But that he could have undertaken it without Grant's wide

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, I, 608.

<sup>3</sup> "In conformity with his [Porter's] special request, General McClelland is to command the army with which the Navy coöperates. This gratifies him, for he dreads and protests against association with any West Point general; says they are too self-sufficient, pedantic, and impractical."—*Diary of Gideon Welles*, I, 167.

experience and unparalleled genius is well beyond the probabilities.

Grant's point of view was even simpler. He had won the battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, compelling the evacuation of Bowling Green and Nashville; had won the Battle of Shiloh, leading to the evacuation of Corinth and Memphis; and had twice been removed from command of his victorious armies, while his superior, Halleck, had filched the credit for his victories and had been promoted to commander-in-chief. Grant had then won the battles of Iuka and Corinth, and in consequence his incompetent subordinate, Rosecrans, had been promoted to the command of the Army of the Ohio. Now another subordinate, McClelland, was planning to take away from him a most important part of his own military district.

To Halleck, risen by the road of dishonor to the command of all the armies, McClelland presented a new threat. Grant, in a succession of victories, had been easy to hold in place. A victorious McClelland might present a different problem. Halleck, pretending a military omniscience, therefore first endeavored to prevent the movement from being undertaken on the ground that it was incorrect in principle, but was overruled and was compelled to issue an order dividing Grant's army into four corps, of which McClelland should command one charged with the river expedition. Then, and not until then, did he assign Grant to command of the Military District of Tennessee so as to place him over McClelland.

Oct. 25,  
1862

With a part of his army ordered to descend the Mississippi and part of it scattered in garrisons away from its line, the remaining force was insufficient for an overland advance. So Grant hoped to hold Pemberton, successor to Van Dorn, in front of him while General Sherman descended the Mississippi and took Vicksburg before McClelland should arrive on the scene or, failing that, establish a base on the east river-bank north of Vicksburg to which Grant could advance.

The plan was a desperate one, undertaken to forestall McClernand, and resulted as might have been expected—in repulse, the most severe in which Grant was ever involved.

Dec. 20,  
1862

On December 20, 1862, after Sherman had left Memphis, the volatile Van Dorn captured and destroyed the depot at Holly Springs while Forrest raided the lines of communication as far north as Columbus. If Sherman's divisions had not been sent down the river, Holly Springs would have been more strongly held and probably would have repelled Van Dorn, and it is normal to suppose that Grant would have taken Jackson and Vicksburg via the overland route, as he had planned. As it was, his enemies were exultant, little dreaming that they had planted in his head the germs of the two ideas with which he was to overthrow them—that he could campaign without a base, living off the country, and that the enemy could not cross a country from which the supplies had been taken and in which the railroads had been destroyed. When he retired from Holly Springs he left such a barrier behind him.

Dec. 20,  
1862

Sherman got away from Memphis on December 20th, before McClernand arrived, delayed two priceless days at Millikens Bend on the west side of the river, decided that the fort at Vicksburg was too strong to capture by assault, and ascended the Yazoo River in quest of a suitable landing-place. He chose the low ground at the foot of Haines's Bluff, which he could command with Porter's gunboats, and from there, on the twenty-ninth, assaulted the Confederates intrenched on the hilltops. The attack failed.

Dec. 29,  
1862

An attack planned for the next day was delayed on account of fog, and, rain following, the project was abandoned and the army returned to the Mississippi. In after years a controversy was staged between General Sherman and General Morgan, commanding the division assigned to the attack, each holding the other responsible for the failure. Whoever may have been to blame for this failure, the lack of persistency in the face of rain and fog was Sherman's. He had been stopped by rain once before, in his

former independent command at Eastport. Fog was considered an advantage to the attackers in the World War, when, to be sure, firearms had become infinitely more deadly and the ground to be marched over was much better known than that at Vicksburg.

The order to General Grant to divide his army into four corps, of which General McClernand was to command one, and to command the expedition down the Mississippi was based upon a plan for a combined land and water attack prepared by Halleck when he was no longer able to prevent or postpone the Mississippi expedition, but was held back by him in bad faith to enable Sherman to get off before McClernand could assume the command. The order was further delayed after it reached Grant by Forrest's rupture of Grant's communications, so that although Grant did not delay it and although McClernand started immediately upon its receipt, and Sherman dallied on the way, McClernand did not reach the army until after the battle of Haines's Bluff had been lost.

It is futile to suggest that if McClernand had arrived on the scene just as the battle was being mounted he could have improved the situation, but it will be seen later that whether in command or in subordinate capacity he was a forceful and dogged commander in attack—which Sherman was not. He arrived just as Sherman's retirement reached the Mississippi and, assuming command, accepted Sherman's judgment that further operations against Vicksburg were impracticable. He also accepted Sherman's suggestion to leave the tough nut of Vicksburg behind, retire two hundred miles up the Arkansas River, and storm the insignificant fortress of Arkansas Post. The enterprise was easily successful, but in its conduct McClernand, apparently an American Vandamme, offended both Sherman and Commodore Porter, who commanded the gunboats.

Jan. 10,  
1863

How affairs might have worked out if he had been left in command, we cannot guess. Sherman was a natural second man and could have added his great capacity for

imagination and organization to McClernand's greater fighting power. The expedition up the Arkansas River, which showed his bent to seek the road of least resistance so momentously demonstrated two and a half years later, suggests that under McClernand's command and Sherman's planning the campaign might have assumed a totally different complexion from that which it developed under Grant.

Grant returned from Holly Springs to Memphis at the bottom of his career. His disgrace after Donelson had been lightened by the undeniable fact of his great victory. His loss of prestige after Shiloh was mitigated by the emphatic support he received from Sherman and Rawlins and the devotion of the soldiers who had remained in the battle. The lack of reward for his great defensive campaign in the summer of 1862 was relieved by its obvious contrast to the calamities on the other fronts.

During all these trials he had held the unwavering support of the powerful Illinois delegation in Congress and of the President. Now he came to the Mississippi doubly defeated to face a rivalry from McClernand fresh from success in his first independent command, "his star always in the ascendant"<sup>4</sup> and presumably closer both to Congress and the President than Grant.<sup>5</sup>

Grant had maintained a marvelously balanced attitude between the politicians and the military clique. After Donelson and Shiloh, he had been supported by the politicians against the soldiers; after Holly Springs he was upheld by the soldiers against the politicians. This nice balance he maintained to the end of the war.

He was to be supported now for the first time by Halleck, because of the latter's jealousy of McClernand and because of his authorship of Grant's unsuccessful moves. Furthermore, the nebulous organization to be known as "Grant Men" had begun to form.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, I, 329.

<sup>5</sup> "I have a greater general now than either Grant or Sherman."—Lincoln. From Louis A. Coolidge, *Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 110.

Battle establishes certain ascendancies between men. Sherman, McPherson, and Rawlins had seen Grant's supremacy in this test. Ord had felt it. Sherman and McPherson had also been recipients of his bounties and had shared with Grant the criticisms of Shiloh in which they had been shaded by McClernand, whose seniority they also resented with the jealousy of regulars for a volunteer placed over them.

John A. Rawlins, Grant's chief-of-staff, had been selected by Grant when appointed brigadier for his strong character and his political influence. He had already defended his chief from criticisms of military derelictions and charges of alcoholism, and in turn had obtained from him a written pledge of total abstinence for the duration of the war.

Aug. 30,  
1861

Now came on the scene Lieutenant James H. Wilson. Wilson, like Rawlins, was an ardent teetotaler, with all the political acumen and bigoted prejudices that signalize such characters. According to the former, Rawlins at their first meeting described Grant as a useful tool for the prosecution of the war and the advancement of his followers, subject to certain limitations, notably his drinking habits. In conclusion, Rawlins proposed an offensive and defensive alliance to protect Grant from himself, support him in war, elevate him in power, by inference, keep rivals away, and rise with his success.<sup>6</sup> E. O. C. Ord, recovering from his

Nov. 7,  
1862

<sup>6</sup> "He said in substance that Grant had been more or less justly criticized at one time or another, and emphasized this by handing me a written pledge in Grant's own handwriting, which he had received some time before. He dwelt upon the danger which this pledge was intended to guard against, and marked his apprehensions in a most dramatic manner by referring to the sword of Damocles. Having thus revealed the worst aspect of the case, he turned swiftly to the other side, and with words equally frank, he assured me that he regarded Grant as a good man, an experienced and courageous officer, who did his whole duty loyally and well, and always told about it plainly and truthfully; that he was cool, level-headed and sensible, of sound judgment, singular modesty, loyalty, and patriotism, and could certainly lead us to victory, if his friends could 'stay him from falling.' Rawlins then added that there were some good officers on the staff, but more bad ones, and that he wanted me to help clean them out. With this done he concluded by declaring that he wanted to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with me for the purpose of weeding

wound received at Davis's Bridge, would complete this military cabal which Grant was to raise high in the military firmament.

April 16,  
1863

For a combination of reasons Grant now decided to move his whole army down the Mississippi. Having been beaten with a divided army, he wanted to keep his troops together, and since a part of the army was consigned by presidential order to operate down the river, he could keep them together only by moving all of them in that direction. Furthermore, at Memphis, Grant received letters from Sherman and from Admiral David Dixon Porter complaining of McClernand and asking Grant to take command. That Sherman's views were caused at least partly by pique is shown by a letter written to Senator Sherman, his political backer:

Mr. Lincoln intended to insult me and the military profession by putting McClernand over me, and I would have quietly folded up my things and gone to St. Louis only I know in times like these all must submit to insult and infamy if necessary.<sup>†</sup>

For a man who had spent most of his life as a civilian, and with his record—up till then one of continuous defeat—his assumption that he belonged to a caste entitled to the favored positions shows the militarist. Sherman was a militarist. By that term I mean that he possessed those faults which military men have the opportunity to display: irascibility, arrogance, hatred of civilians, inordinate professional jealousy, and cruelty. To these faults he joined military virtues of a high order: organizing and administrative power, great personal courage, and moral courage above the ordinary in generals.

Admiral Porter's defection is the significant one in view of his desire, expressed in Washington, to serve with a volunteer general.

out worthless officers, guarding the general against temptation and sustaining him in the performance of the great duties which he would be called on to perform."—J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, p. 100.

<sup>†</sup> Quoted from Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 111.



Grant, therefore, joined the forces returned from Arkansas Post to Napoleon and assumed command of them at Young's Point.

Jan. 30,  
1863

McClermand considered that he had been assigned to command the expedition and that while Grant might give him orders he might not accompany the army or issue commands except through him, so he protested angrily and wrote to Washington, but was not upheld.

It is plain that faith was not kept with him and that his indignation was just. However, there was nothing unfair on Grant's part. He had not been party to the McClermand arrangement and was acting strictly in accordance with his authority and his rights.

Betrayed as he was, there were two legitimate courses open to McClermand: to ask to be relieved, or to make the best of it and to serve loyally in his new position. Grant under similar circumstances at Corinth had done both. McClermand did neither; he served, but disloyally. There is no justification for such a course, but, alas, much and exalted precedent.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GREAT CAMPAIGN OF VICKSBURG

**JAN. 29,**  
**1863** **W**HEN Grant took command at Young's Point on the twenty-ninth of January he became responsible for the fate of a large army and for the conduct of a campaign which neither he nor any one else had contemplated and for which there were no plans. Grant's own plans to advance from Memphis and Grand Junction after protecting his left flank and rear by the demolition of the railroads around Corinth had been negatived by Halleck. Halleck had imposed his own idea, a combined operation over railroad and river, and this had been defeated. McClernand's plan (and just what it was, is unknown) had been aborted.<sup>1</sup>

**JANUARY,**  
**1863** While Lincoln's orders to McClernand regarding an expedition against Vicksburg were not intended to turn the main line of attack from the overland to the river route, they had been enlarged to do so by Halleck. McClernand had then quarreled with Grant over the latter's criticisms of the Arkansas Post expedition; Sherman and Porter had quarreled with McClernand. The consequence of it all was that the Army of the Tennessee was concentrated on the levees of the west bank of the Mississippi under Grant's immediate command, with the largest and most uncertain river of the continent lying between it and the strong and heavily garrisoned fort which had already repulsed two attacks.

At this time the river was high, covering all the landings used in ordinary times and flooding all the roads near the submerged banks, and was obstructed by snags and trees. Planned operations for the purpose of reducing the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 65.

fortress by the established landings and roads were impossible until the water receded. Grant therefore undertook the only course open to him and embarked upon a series of explorations and experiments in an effort to find some avenue of attack presented by the high water and to employ his men through the winter.

Full details of all these enterprises have been published in Grant's *Memoirs* and elsewhere and are plainly marked on the map on page 76. A mere reference to them in the text will suffice.

President Lincoln had already tried to open the Mississippi by a naval expedition which he had sent up the river from New Orleans accompanied by a small military detachment. It had been able to pass the forts at Vicksburg but not to reduce them, and had begun and abandoned work on a canal projected to divert the channel of the river away from the fort. If carried out successfully, the plan was expected to afford safe passage for commerce past the fortress of Vicksburg without battle, cut the bridgehead which the Confederates were using, and open communications for the national army down to Port Hudson. Unfortunately the plan of the canal was faulty in both its hydraulic and its military aspects; its entrance did not open upon the line of the current, and its point of discharge was immediately under the guns of the fort.

June 25,  
1862

Lincoln pressed for the completion of the project, and Grant wisely followed the wishes of his chief, thus conciliating the man in power and making his own tenure more secure, for the President would find it difficult to remove a general for the failure of a presidential plan.

This arduous and futile job Grant gave to McClernand—a mild discipline, since he now had the power to remove him and ample provocation to do so. Two projects he thought more promising he gave to his loyal subordinates.

Jan. 20,  
1863

He detailed McPherson, considered the most skilful engineer in his command, to divert the Mississippi at Lake Providence, some sixty miles above Vicksburg, and to open

Jan. 30,  
1863

a channel via the Red River back to the Mississippi between Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

Feb. 2,  
1863

He caused Wilson to break through the levee across from Helena and sent an expedition to locate a base on dry land. This would have been practicable if it had been undertaken while Grant held the country around the Yalabusha, and would have substituted a safe waterway for the long railroad line that Van Dorn and Forrest had broken, but no one appears to have thought of it at that time. Now the Confederates blocked the channel by a small fortification called Fort Pemberton. In extricating this expedition, Grant sent another up the bayous leading from Steele Creek, which only the energy and courage of General Sherman saved from disaster; "and thus," Grant says, "ended in failure the fourth attempt to get in rear of Vicksburg."<sup>2</sup>

Mar. 15,  
1863

When no progress was made as the weeks grew into months, criticisms of the campaign began to appear, justly, but directed unjustly at Grant. Plots of political and military origin were set on foot to supplant Grant with, respectively, Frémont or McClellan, and now Grant's profound judgment in bearing with McClernand was demonstrated. If Grant were removed, McClernand, next in command, author of the expedition, with whom faith had been broken once, would have tremendous claims to the succession. His star had waned, however, and now that the administration no longer wanted to put him in command he was a protection to Grant, for if the administration were strong enough, or weak enough, to remove Grant, whom it had so often over-sloughed with impunity, it would be less willing to remove both Grant and McClernand.

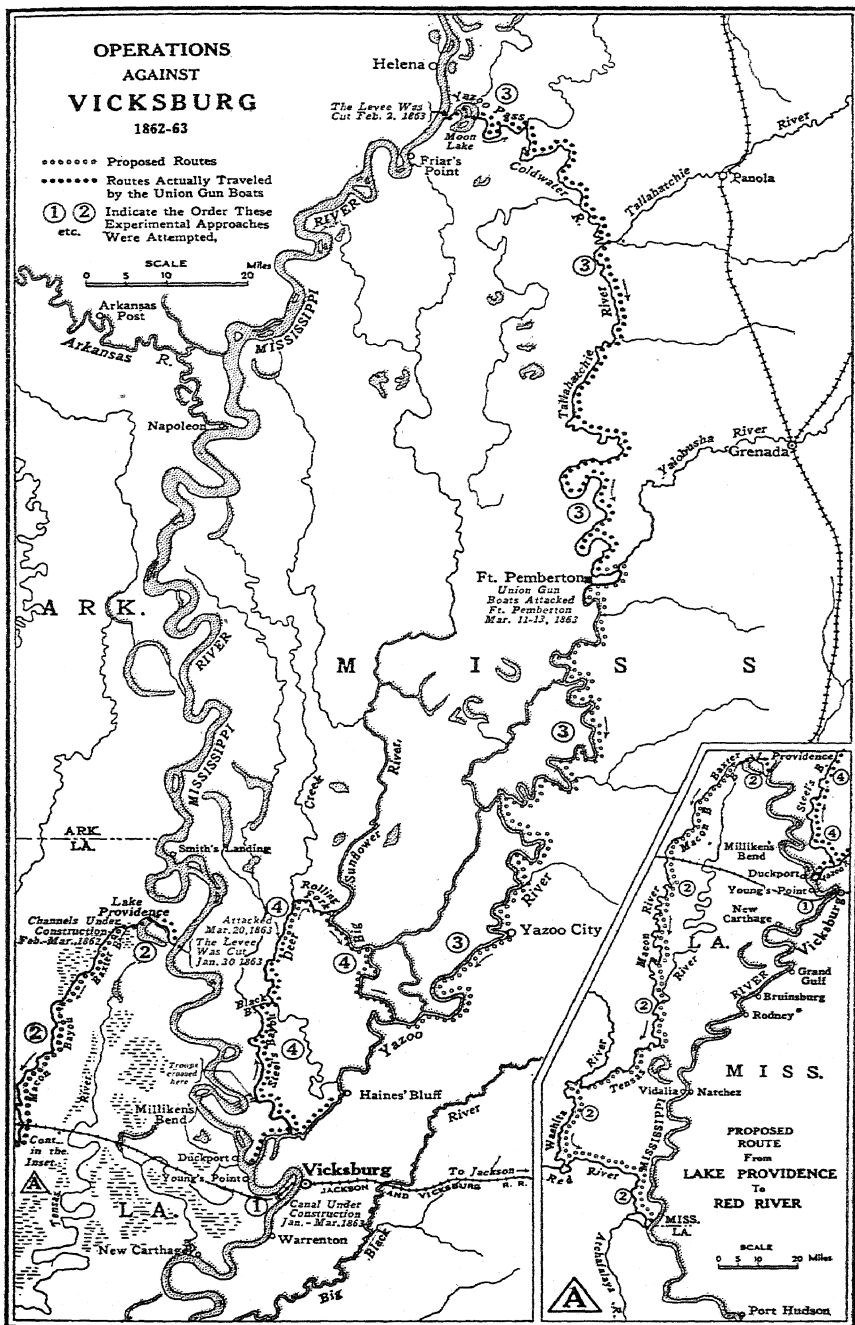
At this time Grant's political views or his political sagacity also helped him. There was a controversy without and within the army over the employment of Negro troops. The generals from the regular army opposed it almost to a man. Grant's perfect willingness to employ them brought him the powerful support of the abolitionists.

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, I, 379.

# OPERATIONS AGAINST VICKSBURG 1862-63

- ..... Proposed Routes
- ..... Routes Actually Traveled by the Union Gun Boats
- ① ② Indicate the Order These Experimental Approaches etc.

SCALE 0 5 10 20 Miles





Lincoln, moreover, was naturally pleased with a general who treated presidential plans with respect, in marked contrast to McClellan, Rosecrans, and some others, and, impressed with his ceaseless activity, he said to a critic who sought Grant's removal, "I rather like the man. I think we will try him a little longer."<sup>3</sup>

Grant's efforts, however, were anything but futile. His activity kept the enemy on the defensive, with all the evil consequences to them of a defensive mentality. It also encouraged his own soldiers to feel that they only had to get at their enemy to beat them,<sup>4</sup> and it exercised the troops and their officers in administration and command until they became the most competent army he ever commanded. As before Palo Alto and the Donelson campaign, circumstances favored Grant in his preparations.

While he was carrying on his bayou expeditions and his engineering efforts, unknown even to his staff he was maturing the studies which were to lead to a campaign which only Napoleon's first campaign in Italy can rival in imagination of conception and brilliancy of execution.

Not until all the bayou projects had failed did Grant broach his plan to attack Vicksburg from the south to his associate, Admiral Porter, and shortly after, on April 4th, to General Halleck as follows:

April 4,  
1863

My expectation is for some of the naval fleet to run the batteries of Vicksburg, whilst the army moves through by this new route [another bayou route from Young's Point to Carthage, which was also abandoned]. Once there, I will move to Warrenton or Grand Gulf, probably the latter. From either of these points, there are good roads to Jackson and the Black River bridge, without crossing Black River. I will keep my army together, and see to it that I am not cut off from my supplies, or beat in any other way than a fair fight.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, I. 180.

<sup>4</sup> See account of Caesar's army at Pharsalus.

<sup>5</sup> *War of the Rebellion, Official Records*, XXIV, series 2, pp. 151-52.

Halleck approved the passage of Vicksburg and the crossing of the river below, but, obsessed with his ideas of combined and controlled operations, ordered that, once across, Grant should join Banks in the seemingly easier task of reducing Port Hudson.

When Grant divulged his plan to cross the river below Vicksburg, all his generals except McClernand opposed it. Sherman, his favorite, whose pique was at least partly responsible for the army's and Grant's predicament, was especially hostile, saying that the move Grant intended to make was one that the enemy would manœuvre a year to force him to. With his instinct for avoiding difficult alternatives, he urged Grant to return to Memphis and again move down the railroads. He enlarged upon his opposition in a personal interview which he sought for that purpose, and reiterated it in a formal letter addressed to Grant's chief-of-staff:

April 8,  
1863

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH ARMY CORPS,  
CAMP NEAR VICKSBURG,  
April 8, 1863.

COLONEL J. A. RAWLINS,

*Assistant Adjutant-General to General Grant.*

SIR: I would most respectfully suggest (for reasons which I will not name) that General Grant call on his corps commanders for their opinions, concise and positive, on the best general plan of a campaign. Unless this be done, there are men who will, in any result falling below the popular standard, claim that *their* advice was unheeded, and that fatal consequence resulted therefrom. My own opinions are—

*First.* That the Army of the Tennessee is now far in advance of the other grand armies of the United States.

*Second.* That a corps from Missouri should forthwith be moved from St. Louis to the vicinity of Little Rock, Arkansas; supplies collected there while the river is full, and land communication with Memphis opened *via* Des Arc on the White, and Madison on the St. Francis River.

*Third.* That as much of the Yazoo Pass, Coldwater, and Tallahatchie Rivers, as can be gained and fortified, be held, and the main



army be transported thither by land and water; that the road back to Memphis be secured and reopened, and, as soon as the waters subside, Grenada be attacked, and the swamp-road across to Helena be patrolled by cavalry.

*Fourth.* That the line of the Yalabusha be the base from which to operate against the points where the Mississippi Central crosses Big Black, above Canton; and, lastly, where the Vicksburg & Jackson Railroad crosses the same river (Big Black). The capture of Vicksburg would result.

*Fifth.* That a minor force be left in this vicinity, not to exceed ten thousand men, with only enough steamboats to float and transport them to any desired point; this force to be held always near enough to act with the gunboats when the main army is known to be near Vicksburg—Haines's Bluff or Yazoo City.

*Sixth.* I do doubt the capacity of Willow Bayou (which I estimate to be fifty miles long and very tortuous) as a military channel, to supply an army large enough to operate against Jackson, Mississippi, or the Black River Bridge; and such a channel will be very vulnerable to a force coming from the west, which we must expect. Yet this canal will be most useful as the way to convey coals and supplies to a fleet that should navigate the lower reach of the Mississippi between Vicksburg and the Red River.

*Seventh.* The chief reason for operating *solely* by water was the season of the year and high water in the Tallahatchie and Yalabusha Rivers. The spring is now here, and soon these streams will be no serious obstacle, save in the ambuscades of the forest, and whatever works the enemy may have erected at or near Grenada. North Mississippi is too valuable for us to allow the enemy to hold it and make crops this year.

I make these suggestions, with the request that General Grant will read them and give them, as I know he will, a share of his thoughts. I would prefer that he should not answer this letter, but merely give it as much or as little weight as it deserves. Whatever plan of action he may adopt will receive from me the same zealous coöperation and energetic support as though conceived by myself. I do not believe General Banks will make any serious attack on Port Hudson this spring. I am, etc.,

W. T. SHERMAN,  
*Major-General,\**

\* *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman, I, 343-44.*

Dec. 29,  
1863

Sherman, it will be remembered, had been defeated on the Mississippi route while Grant had experienced the difficulty of the overland way; but even if he had been won to Sherman's reasoning, Grant knew there could be no backward step for him. The Illinois delegation in Congress would have been powerless to save him from the consequences of a retreat.

It is highly illustrative of the exaltation of Grant's character that he never blamed Sherman for bringing him to the river impasse and, having done so, urging upon him a course he could no longer take, and that under such circumstances Grant could endure this double criticism of his intellectual child without any loss of friendship or of admiration for the critic. Such traits are as rare in soldiers as in civilians.

Mar. 29,  
1863

He was equally fair with McClernand, whom he disliked with ample cause, and, over the protests of Sherman, McPherson, and Rawlins, whose animus toward McClernand already amounted to unreasoning hate, gave to that general the vital responsibility of the advance.

April 20,  
1863

Grant now embarked on the most nearly safe plan that could be made: to move his army down the west bank, run gunboats and transports past the batteries, ferry his army to the east bank, and join with General Banks, commanding at New Orleans, in the reduction first of Port Hudson and then of Vicksburg.

The principal hazard of this scheme was that Pemberton might learn or guess his intention and meet him at his chosen landing.

April 17,  
1863

Accordingly Grant made three diversions to confuse his adversary. Colonel Grierson of the Sixth Illinois Cavalry was started from La Grange to raid Pemberton's rear as Grant's had been raided the previous December; Steele made a feint up the Rolling Fort; and Sherman was *asked* to demonstrate against Haines's Bluff, the scene of his previous defeat:

SMITH'S PLANTATION, LA., Apr. 27, 1863. April 27,  
1863MAJOR-GENERAL WM. T. SHERMAN,  
*Comdg. 15th Army Corps.*

If you think it advisable, you may make a reconnaissance of Haines's Bluff, taking as much force and as many steamers as you like. Admiral Porter told me that he would instruct Captain Breese to do as you asked him with his fleet. The effect of a heavy demonstration in that direction would be good so far as the enemy are concerned, but I am loth to order it, because it would be so hard to make our own troops understand that only a demonstration was intended, and our people at home would characterize it as a repulse. I therefore leave it to you whether to make such a demonstration. If made at all, I advise that you publish your order beforehand, stating that a reconnaissance in force was to be made for the purpose of calling off the enemy's attention from our movements south of Vicksburg, and not with any expectation of attacking. I shall probably move on Grand Gulf to-morrow.

U. S. GRANT.<sup>7</sup>

Sherman answered:

MILLIKEN'S BEND, Apr. 28, 1863.

MAJOR-GENERAL GRANT,

*Comdg. Dept. of the Tennessee, Carthage.*

DEAR GENERAL: I received your letter of the 27th last night, and early this morning went to see Captain Breese, and agreed with him as to the demonstration on Haines's Bluff the moment the *Choctaw* arrives. She was at Memphis last Saturday, and should be here to-day. I will take ten steamers and ten regiments, and go up the Yazoo as close to Haines's as possible without putting the transports under the rifled guns of the enemy. We will make as strong a demonstration as possible. The troops will all understand the purpose, and will not be hurt by the repulse. The people of the country must find out the truth as they best can; it is none of their business. You are engaged in a hazardous enterprise, and, for good reasons, wish to divert attention; that is sufficient to me, and it shall be done. I will be all ready at daylight, and shall embark the men the moment Captain Breese notifies me he is ready.

I have urged General Tuttle, in person, to push the wagon road

<sup>7</sup> *War of the Rebellion, Official Records*, XXIV, series 3, p. 240.

from Duckport back to Walnut Bayou, and will let him have no peace till it is done, and will put a train of about 100 of my regimental wagons on it. Another train of my wagons, from Steele's division, will travel the road by which McPherson went out.

For forage and provisions, we might run the batteries on some of the boats that are now useless on account of the decline in the waters of Walnut Bayou. The road from Young's Point to Briggs' and Bedford below Warrentown, is out of the question; dismiss it from your calculations. The only roads are via Walnut Bayou, and that bayou can only be reached from Milliken's Bend and Duckport.

All is well here, but the rains have made the roads, as you know, muddy and full of ruts.

I am, in haste, yours, truly,

W. T. SHERMAN,

*Major-General, Commanding.*<sup>8</sup>

By his unceasing devotion, Grant sometimes elevated Sherman's eccentric character to the level of his own.

Even if the diversions should keep Pemberton's army away from the point of landing, there still were many uncertainties to face and great obstacles to overcome. The river, constantly changing its level, furnished some; the unknown strength of the enemy defenses others; interrupted communications with Banks still more, necessitating many changes in orders as the campaign progressed. Only the iron will to win remained unchangeable.

Grant had started McClellan's troops past Vicksburg as early as March 29th while still hoping to use the bayou west of the river for transportation. The falling river left the bayous dry, but the troops found roads, made roads, made bridges, built boats, performing skilfully those works for which the habits of the men and the practice of recent months had especially fitted them.

The advance reached New Carthage on the Mississippi below Vicksburg April 6th, and, the rest of the corps com-

Mar. 29,  
1863

April 6,  
1863

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 242-43.

ing up to them, Grant now issued his famous order of April 20th directing the advance:<sup>9</sup>

Special Orders

No. 110.

HEADQUARTERS

DEPARTMENT OF THE TENNESSEE,  
MILLIKEN'S BEND, LA., April 20, 1863.

April 20,  
1863

VIII. The following orders are published for the information and guidance of the army in the field, in its present movement to obtain a foothold on the east bank of the Mississippi River, from which Vicksburg can be approached by practicable roads.

*First.* The Thirteenth Army-corps, Major-General John A. McClernand commanding, will constitute the right wing.

*Second.* The Fifteenth Army-corps, Major-General W. T. Sherman commanding, will constitute the left wing.

*Third.* The Seventeenth Army-corps, Major-General James B. McPherson commanding, will constitute the center.

*Fourth.* The order of march to New Carthage will be from right to left.

*Fifth.* Reserves will be formed by divisions from each army-corps, or an entire army-corps will be held as a reserve, as necessity may require. When the reserve is formed by divisions each division will remain under the immediate command of its respective corps commander, unless otherwise specially ordered for a particular emergency.

*Sixth.* Troops will be required to bivouac, until proper facilities can be afforded for the transportation of camp equipage.

*Seventh.* In the present movement one tent will be allowed to each company for the protection of rations from rain; one wall-tent for each regimental headquarters; one wall-tent for each brigade headquarters; and one wall-tent for each division headquarters. Corps commanders having the books and blanks of their respective commands to provide for are authorized to take such tents as are

<sup>9</sup> Mr. C. L. Raymond suggests that the reader would prefer to have me condense this order in the text and refer him to an appendix for the complete order. I have thought it advisable, however, to incorporate a few of Grant's orders and letters in the text, as evidence that he carried out all his campaigns, especially his Virginia campaign, substantially as he planned them. This seems necessary to disprove the reiterated misstatements that he was constantly repulsed and that he won in the end by the operations of forces beyond the scope of his activities.

absolutely necessary, but not to exceed the number allowed by General Orders No. 160, A. G. O., series of 1862.

*Eighth.* All the teams of the three army-corps, under the immediate charge of the quartermasters bearing them on their returns, will constitute a train for carrying supplies and ordnance and the authorized camp equipage of the army.

*Ninth.* As fast as the Thirteenth Army-corps advances, the Seventeenth Army-corps will take its place; and it, in turn, will be followed in like manner by the Fifteenth Army-corps.

*Tenth.* Two regiments from each army-corps will be detailed by corps commanders to guard the lines from Richmond to New Carthage.

*Eleventh.* General hospitals will be established by the medical director between Duckport and Milliken's Bend. All sick and disabled soldiers will be left in these hospitals. Surgeons in charge of hospitals will report convalescents as fast as they become fit for duty. Each corps commander will detail an intelligent and good drill-officer to remain behind and take charge of the convalescents of their respective corps. Officers so detailed will organize the men under their charge into squads and companies, without regard to regiments they belong to; and in the absence of convalescent commissioned officers to command them, will appoint non-commissioned officers or privates. The force so organized will constitute the guard of the line from Duckport to Milliken's Bend. They will furnish all the guards and details required for general hospitals, and, with the contrabands that may be about the camps, will furnish all the details for loading and unloading boats.

*Twelfth.* The movement of troops from Milliken's Bend to New Carthage will be so conducted as to allow the transportation of ten days' supply of rations, and one half the allowance of ordnance required for previous orders.

*Thirteenth.* Commanders are authorized and enjoined to collect all the beef-cattle, corn, and other necessary supplies on the line of march; but wanton destruction of property, taking of articles useless for military purposes, insulting citizens, going into and searching houses without proper orders from division commanders, are positively prohibited. All such irregularities must be summarily punished.

*Fourteenth.* Brigadier-General J. C. Sullivan is appointed to the command of all the forces detailed for the protection of the line

from here to New Carthage. His particular attention is called to General Orders No. 69, from Adjutant-General's Office, Washington, of date March 20, 1863.

By order of

MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.<sup>10</sup>

The gunboats had made their celebrated passage of the Vicksburg batteries on April 16, 1863, followed by the unarmed transports which were manned for the most part by heroic volunteers from the army, and a further passage was made by a fleet of six steamers and twelve barges, of which five steamers and six barges got through. The hope that a landing could be made on the lowland above Grand Gulf was drowned by the stage of the river, and the army marched on the twenty-fourth another twenty-two miles to Hard Times, the boats following the river. This was followed by an effort by the gunboats to silence the forts at Grand Gulf and to storm them. The attempt failed with heavy loss to the flagship.

April 16,  
1863

April 22,  
1863

April 24,  
1863

April 29,  
1863

The Vicksburg manœuver was then repeated. The troops marched overland across the point of land opposite Grand Gulf, and the boats ran the batteries by night, picked up the troops, and landed them at Bruinsberg on the east bank. Grant had expected to put his army ashore at Rodney, when a Negro refugee informed him of the landing-place at Bruinsberg, from which a road ran to the heights of Port Gibson—the only agreeable surprise that had come in the campaign. This landfall shortened the river voyage by a dozen miles and the land-march by as much, giving to Grant precious hours which he knew how to use as no general since Napoleon.

From Milliken's Bend he had marched, waded, cut his way, and sailed seventy miles in the face of harassing detachments. By itself, this was a great military feat, but it was only a prelude to greater things.

Nowhere is the soul of the great soldier better revealed

<sup>10</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, I, 390-92.

in words than by Grant in alluding to his sensations upon debarking at Bruinsberg:

When this was effected I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equaled since. Vicksburg was not yet taken, it is true, nor were its defenders demoralized by any of our previous moves. I was now in the enemy's country, with a vast river and the stronghold of Vicksburg between me and my base of supplies. But I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, hardships, and exposures, from the month of December previous to this time, that had been made and endured, were for the accomplishment of this one object.<sup>11</sup>

April 30,  
1863

In order to bring over the rest of the army at that point, it was necessary to capture Grand Gulf before it could be reinforced. McClernand was started immediately on this operation, while Grant superintended the arrival of McPherson's troops.

The Confederate forces had marched out from Grand Gulf and occupied strong positions across two roads where the highway divided and ran on both sides of a ravine before it joined again at Port Gibson. McClernand met them there and acted with a promptness and skill which, if he were less objectionable to military teachers, would have made his action a textbook example of the correct use of an advance guard on a par with that of Lannes at Saalfeld or the Prussians at Nachod.<sup>12</sup>

May 1,  
1863

McClernand contained the enemy's right with one division and threw his other three divisions upon the hostile left. His right flank in overwhelming force was driving the enemy and assuring a victory when Grant arrived upon the scene and, with two divisions of McPherson's corps, in turn drove in the Confederate right flank.

The enemy retreated, destroying the bridges over a stream called Bayou Pierre and offering rear-guard resistance on every ridge. Grant pursued vigorously across

May 2,  
1863

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 400-1.

<sup>12</sup> See Ferdinand Foch, *The Principles of War*, pp. 171-252.







Bayou Pierre and pushed McPherson across the Big Black at Hankinson's Ferry to a line within six or seven miles of Vicksburg. He then proceeded in person to Grand Gulf, now evacuated, to bring over to that point the rest of his army and such supplies as had been transported by one means or another from Milliken's Bend.

There he received terrible news. Sherman's surmise had proved correct. Banks would not be able to coöperate with him until May 10th, and then with only fifteen thousand men. Such a delay could not be contemplated. It would restore to the enemy the initiative which Grant had seized by his arduous march, bold river-crossing, and brilliant battle. It would enable them to recover from their surprise, to bring up reinforcements, to consolidate their defenses, and to choose offensive operations from various alluring alternatives—either to cut Grant's already insufficient communications or to invade northern Mississippi.

April 10,  
1863

It would have paralyzed most generals to find their labor, skill, and daring thus brought to naught by the failure of others to even attempt to carry out their share of a combined plan.

Fortunately for himself, his army, and his country, in this crisis Grant possessed a heroic mind. While Sherman could see only the perils and difficulties of his position, Grant saw with equal clearness the perils and difficulties that confronted his opponent. By his bold marches and lightning attacks Grant had not only turned the Vicksburg defenses and made the fort of Grand Gulf into a base for himself, but by boldly crossing the Big Black he had given Pemberton cause to expect a continuation of his advance. An advance, which would bring on an immediate battle, itself desirable because of his shortage of supplies, he considered impractical because it involved a frontal assault upon an intrenched army based upon a great fortress and protected by unfordable rivers on each flank and with an open road in its rear over which to receive reinforcements.

Moreover, his own force north of the river lent itself to the use for which military literature finds many terms to enrich itself and confuse the laity—"the strategic advance guard," "a feint," "a diversion," "a fixing of the enemy." By "imposing" upon Pemberton with this force, he planned to turn the topography of the country against him.

The Big Black ran back, unfordable, from the Mississippi in a northeasterly direction for fifty miles and crossed the Vicksburg-Jackson railroad at Black River Bridge some twenty-four miles from its mouth.

On the same day that he heard of Banks' defection<sup>13</sup> Grant determined to move along the south side of the river, place himself between Pemberton and reinforcements assembling for his rescue, and defeat them in detail while protecting himself from attack from Pemberton by holding the river crossings during the process. He ordered all available reinforcements from Memphis and then, as at Fort Henry, informed Halleck of his intended march too late to be recalled.

May 6,  
1863

The threat to attack across the Big Black kept Pemberton quiet while Grant brought Sherman, who had finished his diversion at Haines's Bluff, across the Mississippi with a train of 120 wagons. These and vehicles impressed from the inhabitants were to be his ammunition-carriers. The bulk of the food for the army could be taken from the country as he had learned after the loss of Holly Springs and on the march from Bruinsberg, for, having accepted Halleck's plan to cooperate with Banks, Grant had made preparations to supply his army on both sides of the river below Vicksburg but not to carry on a campaign into the interior.

May 7,  
1863

Appalled at the daring of Grant's genius, which he did not comprehend, Sherman wrote in protest to Grant, urging

May 9,  
1863

<sup>13</sup> This may have been due to a misunderstanding, because a message from Grant to Banks had to be carried over enemy country and was memorized to prevent its falling into enemy hands. The messenger, according to Banks, did not repeat the message accurately.

him to "stop all troops till your army is partially supplied with wagons, and then act as quickly as possible; for this road will be jammed, as sure as life."<sup>14</sup>

Grant replied:

I do not calculate upon the possibility of supplying the army with full rations from Grand Gulf. I know it will be impossible without constructing additional roads. What I do expect is to get up what rations of hard bread, coffee, and salt we can, and make the country furnish the balance. We started from Bruinsberg with an average of about two days' rations, and received no more from our own supplies for some days. Abundance was found in the meantime. A delay would give the enemy time to reinforce and fortify.<sup>15</sup>

As he approached the point where the railroad crossed the Big Black River he learned that the enemy had taken up a position in observation on the east bank. At the same time McPherson came upon a force of Confederates from Port Hudson at Raymond, defeated them, and drove them toward Jackson.

Grant now concluded that if he attacked Pemberton in his defensive position, he would lay himself open to a simultaneous attack from Jackson—such a situation as destroyed Napoleon at Waterloo when attempting a not dissimilar *tour de force*. He therefore decided to capture and destroy Jackson and its railroads and thus protect his rear by demolitions during his contest with Pemberton.

To this end he moved McPherson on Jackson via Clinton, and Sherman, who was in rear of McPherson, by the direct road on the same point, so that they could attack simultaneously. McClernand was brought up as a reserve against Jackson and a rear-guard against Pemberton, and all contact with the Mississippi River was abandoned. The trains and the troops on the march to join him were for the moment left to their own devices. He thus came upon Jackson in overwhelming force and scattered in all directions the

May 13,  
1863

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, I, 228.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 228-29.

troops under Joseph E. Johnston, who had arrived the previous night.

Grant now benefited from an outstanding piece of intelligence work on the part of General Hurlbut in Memphis. This officer, before the war a distinguished lawyer, had held a pretended investigation and had drummed certain men out of town for expressing "disloyal" sentiments. One of these spies was selected to be one of three messengers to carry orders from Johnston to Pemberton, and he brought to Grant the order for Pemberton to attack the rear of Sherman's corps, which Johnston thought was isolated before the city of Jackson. Grant assumed from this that Johnston planned to join with Pemberton, cross the Big Black, and take up a defensive position before Vicksburg, with his flanks covered by two unfordable streams.

He was further enlightened by some railroad laborers who had unaccountably been allowed to pass through the Confederate army and who reported that eighty regiments and ten batteries were advancing from Edward's Station.

Grant immediately gave orders for a concerted attack upon Pemberton. McClernand from rear-guard again became the advance; Osterhaus and Carr moved forward in the center; Smith, Blair, and Ransom, arriving from Grand Gulf, took the extreme left; while Hovey on the right marched forward from Clinton. McPherson followed Hovey on the Bolton-Edward's road, and Sherman, ordered to evacuate Jackson and march to the front, became the strategical reserve.

The next morning McClernand's advance divisions found the enemy successively from left flank to right, and that general sent for instructions.

May 16,  
1863

Hovey, upon meeting resistance, informed McPherson in his rear, who asked Grant to come up in person. Grant immediately rode to the front, clearing the roads of transport to let the soldiers pass, took immediate command of McPherson's corps and of Hovey's division of McCler-

nand's corps, and sent orders by courier to McClernand, Blair, and Ransom to move forward cautiously and watch out for an enemy force reported on the extreme left.

Grant moved forward the troops under his eye so much faster than McClernand that, after waiting some time formed for battle, he attacked before McClernand was up. In consequence, the battle of Champion's Hill was fought by Grant with four divisions against Pemberton commanding two, while McClernand's four divisions and Loring's Confederate division in effect "contained" each other, though this was not contemplated by either commander-in-chief, Grant wanting McClernand to attack and Pemberton ordering Loring to come to his aid.

May 16,  
1863

In the actual fight Grant had fifteen thousand men against Pemberton's ten to twelve thousand established in a strong but not intrenched position. Grant used all his men, attacking in front and turning Pemberton's left flank. At one time his troops held the enemy's line of retreat, but as he did not know this and needed them sorely elsewhere, he withdrew them, letting Pemberton escape, so that he was compelled to besiege Vicksburg.

McClernand, Blair, and Ransom came on the field as the enemy fled and probably had the same effect on the result as had Ord and McPherson approaching Corinth the previous summer.

Pemberton now retreated to Black River Bridge, while Loring, whose manœuvres on the left flank had mystified Grant and delayed McClernand's attack, escaped to the south by Utica and joined General Johnston at Jackson.

McClernand's unexhausted troops furnished the force to pursue, as Blücher's did at Waterloo. That Grant so used them here, when he was uninjured and unexhausted, indicates clearly that Buell and not he was responsible for Buell's failure to pursue after Shiloh.

Grant also ordered Sherman, who had not reached the battle, to move to Bridgeport to outflank the enemy if they made a stand at the Big Black River. As soon as Pemberton

May 17,  
1863

arrived at that obstacle he turned his exhausted troops at bay in a fortified bridge-head in face of the untired troops that pursued him.

Commanders are continually disappointed by the failure of subordinates to carry out their missions. This is inevitable. In the perfected and practiced organizations of civil life errors of executives are frequent. How much more frequent must they be in military organizations, which are either new to the practice of war or broken up by the casualties it entails, disrupted by the violent interpositions of the enemy, and confused by the constant anxiety and excitement of danger.

Less often are commanders aided or rescued by the unexpected achievements of subordinates. Napoleon was saved by Desaix at Marengo, set on the road to success by Lannes and Murat at the bridge of Vienna, and given triumph in Germany by Davout's marvelous victory at Auerstadt. Without the unforeseen generalship of the inexperienced Prince of Holland at Quatre Bras, Wellington and Blücher could not have survived Napoleon's surprise attack at Ligny and Quatre Bras.

Grant's whole military career was dotted with such services. He was a welcome volunteer at Monterey and almost indispensable at San Cosme. In the Civil War he took Paducah, Smithland, Fort Donelson, and Nashville without higher orders, and but for Buell's timidity he might have done all the work of the Shiloh, Corinth, and Vicksburg campaigns during the pursuit after Donelson.

Now, while he was waging his greatest campaign against the wishes of his superior officer, he was to benefit from the first of the few unordered achievements of his subordinates.

At the very moment that Grant was receiving and refusing to obey an order from General Halleck to abandon the Vicksburg campaign and join General Banks, Brigadier-General Lawler, a veteran of the Mexican War, found a gap in the defense of the bridge-head and, without asking for permission, charged and drove the enemy in confusion from

Sept. 23,  
1846  
Sept. 13,  
1847

May 17,  
1863



its position, killing and capturing many of them. The survivors delayed only to fire the bridge and fled back to the fortress of Vicksburg. We shall see later that if Hancock and Burnside had made as good use of the opportunities presented to them in the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania, the war would have been ended in 1864.

Dana wrote of Lawler after the siege:

Lawler weighs two hundred and fifty pounds, is a Roman Catholic, and was a Douglas Democrat, belongs in Shawneetown, Ill., and served in the Mexican War. He is as brave as a lion, and has about as much brains; but his purpose is always honest, and his sense is always good. He is a good disciplinarian and a first-rate soldier. He once hung a man of his regiment for murdering a comrade, without reporting the case to his commanding general either before or after the hanging, but there was no doubt the man deserved his fate. Grant has two or three times gently reprimanded him for indiscretions, but is pretty sure to go and thank him after a battle.<sup>16</sup>

Lawler was never rewarded for his brilliance, nor was his exceptional initiative given further play after Vicksburg. He appears to have been destroyed in the fall of McClelland.

Grant's victories in the campaign, of course, had broken the morale of the defense, and he had sent Sherman to outflank the position. But while these achievements redound to the credit of the chief, they do not detract from the brilliancy of the exploit of the subordinate, which has been insufficiently recognized in history.

While Grant's troops were building bridges, Sherman crossed the river at the now abandoned position of Bridgeport on the pontoon-train Grant had sent him and was the first corps-commander to reach Vicksburg. Grant joined him on the way, and the two looked down from Haines's Bluff on the scene of Sherman's defeat six months before. Sherman, though he was not yet sure of capturing the fortress, paid generous tribute to the author of the cam-

<sup>16</sup> Charles A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War*, p. 65.

paign which he had not thought would succeed until that moment.

May 18,  
1863

Grant quickly spread his army around the fort and assaulted. The assault failing, he spent two days more in reconnoitering and approaching the works, attacked again, and again was beaten off.

May 22,  
1863

In his *Memoirs* he apologizes for the second attack. I do not feel that any apology is called for. Certainly since the development of rifles, probably since the invention of flint-lock muskets, the effect of assaults had not been calculable. A general could use skill and judgment in bringing his troops to the point of impact. Thereafter the result depended upon the firmness of the defenders. They might run as at Black River Bridge or they might stand as at Vicksburg. If they stood, the bullets of the defenders were always stronger than the breasts of the attackers.

With his unbroken experience of successful attack and not too successful defense, General Grant was justified in expecting victory if he ever was, and if victory had been won that day, a great army would have been made available for the whole season—to be mismanaged by Halleck.

In his *Memoirs* Grant minimizes the nearness of success because of the subsequent unfortunate controversy.

May 22,  
1863

The brigade of General Lawler, the hero of Black River Bridge, came close to storming the defenses. After Sherman and McPherson confessed themselves beaten, McClernand still hoped for victory and asked for further attacks in support of his own. They were delivered and were repulsed, as were reinforcements sent to McClernand. Much acrimony and bitterness ensued, culminating in a "congratulatory order" by McClernand to his troops which not only belittled the rest of the army but was clothed in language derogatory to the army-commander.

The order was not communicated to headquarters, as provided by regulations, and was published in the Memphis newspapers. Grant ignored it until the cabal made it the occasion and the ostensible cause to get rid of McClernand,

who had always shaded and threatened them. Rawlins, armed with indignant protests which Sherman and McPherson had evidently written in concert, obtained an order relieving McClernand from command of the army-corps, and Wilson immediately delivered it, although it was midnight, because they expected a Confederate sortie, in which event they *feared* that McClernand would so distinguish himself as to cause Grant to withdraw the order.

June 18,  
1863  
1 A. M.

The McClernand episode forms one of the great tragedies of the war. Patriotic, brave, and skilful in the earlier battles, he conceived the outline of the campaign which Grant carried out so brilliantly, and he was the outstanding subordinate in its execution. If he expressed insubordinate remarks during its execution, so did McPherson when ordered to advance after the battle of Raymond.<sup>17</sup> His fall was brought about by a conspiracy against him rather than by his open rivalry to his chief, who could better afford to ignore him than to do without him. Until Five Forks, no subordinate of Grant fought such a battle as Port Gibson.

April 1,  
1865  
May 1,  
1863

All the history of McClernand was written by his enemies. Its virulence is evidence of his capacity. Successful generals do not storm at the memory of insignificant rivals they have combined to overcome.

McClernand was so completely and finally crushed by Grant, both in the army and in political life, that his story only remains in a few letters<sup>18</sup> which show that Grant had ample warrant for removing the only general who ever wanted to fight when Grant did not.

When later his friends asked a command for him, Lincoln, in refusing, gave him his full due:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,  
Aug. 12, 1863

MAJOR-GENERAL MCCLERNAND:

MY DEAR SIR: Our friend William G. Greene has just presented

<sup>17</sup> J. H. Wilson, *Under the Old Flag*, I, 198-99.

<sup>18</sup> See Badeau, *op. cit.*, I, appendix, pp. 608-15, 626, 655, 661.

a kind letter in regard to yourself, addressed to me by our other friends, Yates, Hatch, and Dubois.

I doubt whether your present position is more painful to you than to myself. Grateful for the patriotic stand so early taken by you in this life-and-death struggle of the nation, I have done whatever has appeared practicable to advance you and the public interest together. No charges with a view to a trial have been preferred against you by any one, nor do I suppose any will be. All there is, so far as I have heard, is General Grant's statement of his reasons for relieving you. And even this I have not seen or sought to see, because it is a case, as appears to me, in which I could do nothing without doing harm. General Grant and yourself have been conspicuous in our most important successes, and for me to interfere and thus magnify a breach between you could not but be of evil effect. Better leave it where the law of the case has placed it. For me to force you back upon General Grant would be forcing him to resign. I cannot give you a new command, because we have no forces except such as already have commanders.

I am constantly pressed by those who scold before they think, or without thinking at all, to give commands respectively to Fremont, McClellan, Butler, Sigel, Curtis, Hunter, Hooker, and perhaps others, when, all else out of the way, I have no commands to give them. This is now your case, which, as I have said, pains me not less than it does you. My belief is that the permanent estimate of what a general does in the field is fixed by the "cloud of witnesses" who have been with him in the field, and that, relying on these, he who has the right needs not to fear.

Your friend as ever,

A. LINCOLN.<sup>19</sup>

June 18,  
1863

With the fall of McClernand, General E. O. C. Ord was assigned to command of the Thirteenth Corps, completing the group of "Grant Men" who were to ride to high position in his train. Judging by the failures of his future subordinates, Grant might well have taken East with him more of the men who participated in his greatest victories.

It should be borne in mind that at the time he disciplined McClernand for insubordination Grant had completed the

<sup>19</sup> *War of the Rebellion, Official Records*, LII, series 1, part 1, supplement, serial no. 109, p. 437.

greatest campaign of his life in contemplated disobedience of his superior, and his great victory of Donelson was achieved under similar circumstances. We may also observe that Sheridan was almost continually insubordinate. This is not a justification of McClernand. Obedience to orders and loyalty to superiors under all conditions and provocations are cardinal principles of military life. The moral is that they are violated at the peril of the violator. The only justification for their violation is success, and the only successful violators are geniuses.

Now followed the siege of Vicksburg, so effectively organized that no attack was delivered from outside to raise it and no sortie of the garrison was attempted in order to escape.

In the hope of effecting a diversion, General Lee embarked upon the Gettysburg campaign and exposed his army to destruction.

Bombardments were carried on with field-guns, coehorns, naval guns, and mortars from mortar-boats. The defenders had recourse to dugouts. Two mines were sprung, and as the saps came close to the defending parapets, as other mines were finished, and as preparations were completed for an overwhelming assault, Pemberton surrendered.

July 4,  
1863

In his account of the surrender, Pemberton said that he timed it for the Fourth of July because he knew Grant's egotism would lead him to give more favorable terms in order to celebrate his victory on the national holiday.

Grant had a much better reason to hurry, and Pemberton had the same reason to delay: Lee and Meade were engaged in the Battle of Gettysburg. If Lee should win, Grant and his army would have to start East immediately. It was infinitely better to have his triumphant army intact than to have it weakened by the losses of an assault.

An interesting item which General Grant records in his *Memoirs* is that when he took the city of Vicksburg with an army that had been armed by the ordnance department, with the unlimited resources of the Government behind it

and all the world at its disposition, the first thing his men did after the capitulation was to abandon the weapons that their Government had given to them and take instead the rifles that the agents of the Confederacy, almost without credit, had bought wherever they could find them, had shipped to Vera Cruz, and brought on muleback across the Texas frontier.

Sherman has pointed out that Grant conducted this campaign down to the smallest details. He wrote orders to divisions and even to brigades with his own hand and personally directed the extraordinary and improvised system of supply. No one in his command was nearly so capable to do this, or as experienced as he, and the army was not too large for one man to attend to all the details.

As he functioned so smoothly and rapidly he might have thanked his fate for the bitter day long ago in Mexico when he had been removed from command of troops and assigned as regimental quartermaster. His experience in providing for his regiment and for the needs of other regiments less capably officered, especially his experience in amphibious movements, gave him background for the amphibious campaigns he was to conduct all through the Civil War

His own enterprise and gallantry as a volunteer had taught him more lessons in combat than he could have received as a company-commander. At Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma he served with infantry; at Cerro Gordo he acted as artillery officer; at Molino del Rey and San Cosme he conceived and carried out independent manœuvres of troops. No other officer in the Mexican War was given as much military experience as Grant found for himself.

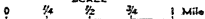
During the siege Johnston had approached Grant's lines. Grant in turn had built defensive works to protect his landing at Haines's Bluff and his rear. He had given Sherman a semi-detached command of these works and troops to man them.

He informed Sherman as soon as Pemberton asked for a parley; and when the surrender was consummated, he

## MISSISSIPPI

From the 12<sup>th</sup> of May to  
the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1863

0      1/4      SCALE      1/2      3/4      1 Mile







ordered him to go after Johnston. The available troops, if successfully employed, were sufficient to destroy Johnston. They warranted the boldest manœuvres. Nothing worse than a check could occur to them. Sherman, however, moved as cautiously as Halleck had advanced at Corinth, pushed Johnston straight into his defenses at Jackson, and besieged him there. Even then a bold move around the flank might have captured the force. Sherman was not capable of the responsibility, and Johnston escaped.

As this work is not a history of the Civil War or even of that part in which General Grant participated, but only an effort to bring out phases of Grant's accomplishments that have been belittled or ignored, it has omitted many incidents of importance. Likewise, while outlining the movements of Grant's forces, it has not told the contemporaneous developments of those of the enemy, but only what Grant heard of them. A sketch of the enemy activities during the campaign will show how skilful Grant was in his twilight of partial information.

Pemberton was charged with the defense of Vicksburg and Port Hudson and of course the country behind them. As the only activity Banks showed was a demonstration against Port Hudson on March 14, 1863, and as Grant had been *ubiquitous*, Pemberton had devoted himself to counter-  
ing Grant's moves.

Mar. 14,  
1863

He had erected a battery to bar passage of the Williams Canal opposite Vicksburg; he had reinforced Port Hudson when it was believed that the Lake Providence route would succeed; he had blocked the Yazoo Pass moves by building Fort Pemberton; and had harassed Porter and Sherman out of Steele's Bayou.

Grant had been so secret that the early movements toward Hard Times had caused Pemberton no apprehension, while Sherman's insistence upon the need to go back to Memphis and start south from there had been spread abroad so that when a small marine brigade was moved in that direction, it was accepted as evidence that Sherman's advice was

being acted upon, and Jefferson Davis ordered troops from Jackson to eastern Tennessee where Rosecrans was lying idle. The marches of McClernand's and McPherson's corps to Hard Times were observed by three regiments of Confederate infantry, but their importance was blanketed by Steele's movement at Rolling Fork and Sherman's demonstration at Haines's Bluff.

April 30,  
1863

With the capture of Bruinsberg and Port Gibson, however, Pemberton ordered Gregg with six thousand men from Port Hudson to Jackson, now occupied by eleven thousand men. Grierson's raid then caused the greatest confusion in his mind. He still feared that the passage of Vicksburg might be a diversion, and Grierson's the move in force. If a quick concentration against Grant might have been successful in the first days of May, the Grierson diversion—most brilliant expedition of its kind performed during the war—prevented it. Starting from LaGrange on April 17th with a force not exceeding a thousand men, Grierson marched through enemy territory, destroying railroads and bridges, and arrived safely at Baton Rouge on the second of May.

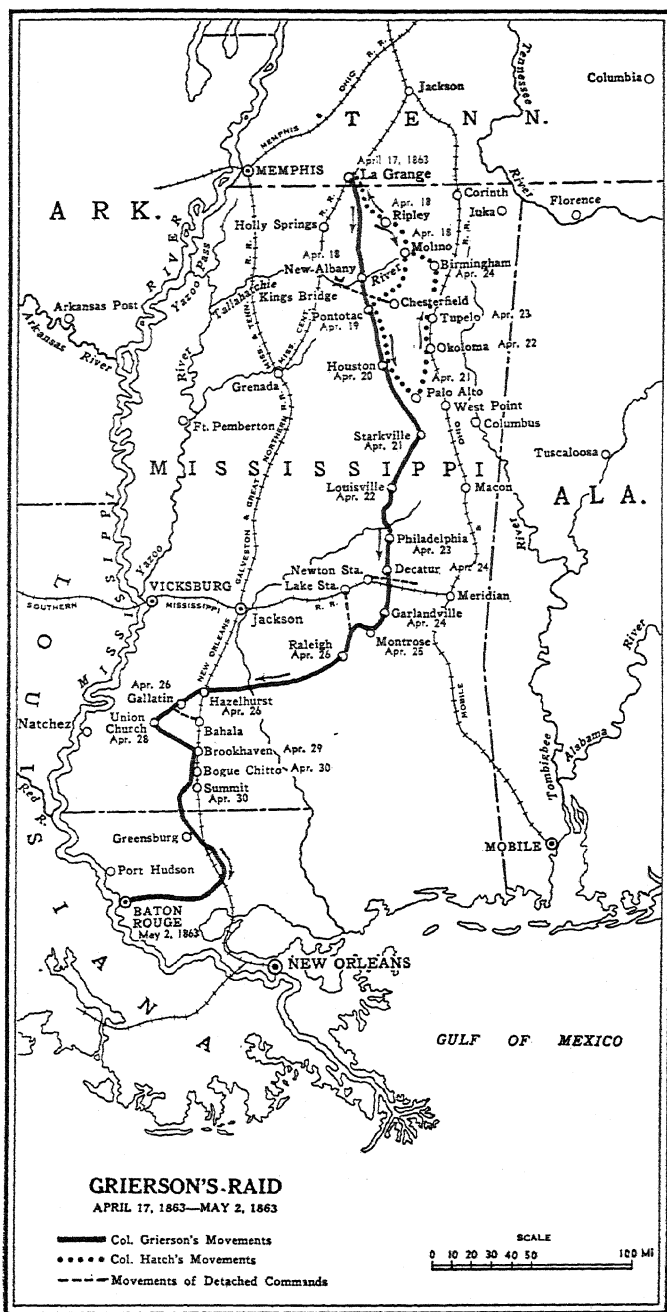
April 17,  
1863

May 6,  
1863

When Grant, after taking Grand Gulf, withdrew his force across the Big Black and started East, Pemberton first concentrated at Bovina to resist him at Black River Bridge and then crossed the river to Edward's Station so as to get his Vicksburg, Jackson, and Port Hudson troops close enough to act together. He expected to be attacked at that point and ordered Gregg to take Grant in the rear, hoping for great results from this nut-cracker evolution. But as we have seen, Grant did not attack Edward's Station, so the effect of Pemberton's order was to cause Gregg to stand fast at Raymond and be defeated by McPherson's overwhelming force.

May 13,  
1863

When Johnston arrived at Jackson the next day and heard of Sherman's, but not of McPherson's, proximity, he ordered Pemberton to attack Sherman's rear:





May 13, 1863

I have lately arrived, and learn that Major-General Sherman is between us with four divisions at Clinton. It is important to re-establish communications, that you may be reenforced. If practicable, come up in his rear at once. To beat such a detachment would be of immense value. All the troops you can quickly assemble should be brought. Time is all-important.<sup>20</sup>

Pemberton knew this order could not be carried out. He wanted to remain in place and fight a defensive battle, but, fearing to disobey orders on his sole responsibility, he called a council of war. A majority, although disbelieving in the practicability of the plan, counseled obedience. A minority counseled crossing Fourteen-Mile Creek, now abandoned by McClernand, and cutting Grant's communications. Fearing both to obey and the consequences of disobedience, Pemberton followed the advice of the minority and was across the creek when he heard from Johnston:

CANTON ROAD, TEN MILES FROM JACKSON  
8:30 A. M., May 15th

Our being compelled to leave Jackson makes your plan impracticable. The only mode by which we can unite is by your moving directly to Clinton, and informing me that we may move to that point with about six thousand.<sup>21</sup>

May 15,  
1863

He turned back and was on the march for Clinton, now occupied by Sherman, via Edward's Station and the Brownsville road when the attack of McClernand's divisions on his rear-guard forced him to turn at bay on Champion's Hill.

Ever since Achilles dragged Hector's body around the walls of Troy there has been an intermittent custom of spurning the vanquished. Pemberton was an easy victim. Born in the North, he was liable to strictures on his military honor for leaving the regular army—strictures to which soldiers who followed their states are not fairly amenable;

<sup>20</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, I, 241, footnote.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from Francis V. Greene, *The Mississippi*, p. 152.

a Northerner, he found no champions in the South. In consequence, his record is generally abused in spite of the fact that he is the only soldier who ever drove Grant back, who occupied Grant's entire attention for over six months, and the only one who compelled Grant to adopt a desperate expedient to win.

Pemberton cannot be censured for not *guessing* that Grant would cross his army below Vicksburg on June 30th. After that occurrence his only chance to win lay in taking advantage of a mistake by Grant, and Grant made no mistakes that even his supercritical biographers can blow up into semblance of fact.

Passing over an inconsiderable skirmish at Milliken's Bend, two important events closed the war on the Mississippi River. Port Hudson had been laid under siege by General Banks on May 28, 1863. On July 7th, on receiving confirmation of the fall of Vicksburg, it surrendered.

On the very day that Vicksburg surrendered, the Confederate forces in Arkansas desperately tried to storm Helena before it could be reinforced by troops taken from the besiegers, with the object of making of it a barrier to Union traffic on the Mississippi River instead of the now doomed Vicksburg. General Prentiss held it gallantly and completely repulsed all assaults. Then he retired from the army, one of the few generals to win a victory in independent command.

For the great victory at Vicksburg President Lincoln appointed Grant to the highest rank at his command—major-general in the regular army. Major Buchanan, who had forced Captain Grant to resign in 1854, was still Major Buchanan.

MAY 28,  
1863

JULY 7,  
1863

JULY 4,  
1863

JULY 31,  
1854

## CHAPTER VII

### CHATTANOOGA

**R**EACTING from the heaviest physical, mental, and moral strains that any American ever sustained in shouldering the greatest military *tour de force* enacted on this continent, Grant is reported to have embarked on a series of sprees after the Confederates were safely invested and again after the surrender.

During the siege he left his command to go on a steamboat excursion and was brought back unconscious. Intoxication is strongly intimated by several writers, but no accusation was definitely made by any witness, and no other cause for his illness has been advanced.

At that time Rawlins wrote him the following famous letter:

BEFORE VICKSBURG, MISS.,  
June 6th, 1863, 1 A. M.

DEAR GENERAL:

The great solicitude I feel for the safety of this army leads me to mention, what I had hoped never again to do, the subject of your drinking. This may surprise you, for I may be, and trust I am, doing you an injustice by unfounded suspicion, but if in error, it had better be on the side of the country's safety than in fear of offending a friend.

I have heard that Dr. McMillan at General Sherman's a few days ago induced you, notwithstanding your pledge to me, to take a glass of wine, and to-day when I found a box of wine in front of your tent, and proposed to move it, which I did, I was told you had forbid its being taken away, for you intended to keep it until you entered Vicksburg, that you might have it for your friends; and to-night, when you should, because of the condition of your health, if nothing else, have been in bed, I find you where the wine bottle has just been emptied, in company with those who drink and urge you to do like-

wise; and the lack of your usual promptness and decision, and clearness of expressing yourself in writing, conduces to confirm my suspicion.

You have the full control over your appetite, and can let drink-  
ing alone. Had you not pledged me the sincerity of your honor  
early last March, that you would drink no more during the war, and  
kept that pledge during your recent campaign, you would not to-day  
have stood first in the world's history as a successful military leader.  
Your only salvation depends upon your strict adherence to that  
pledge. You cannot succeed in any other way. . . .

As I have before stated, I may be wrong in my suspicions, but  
if one sees that which leads him to suppose a sentinel is falling  
asleep on his post, it is his duty to arouse him; and if one sees that  
which leads him to fear the General commanding a great army is  
being seduced to that step which he knows will bring disgrace upon  
that General and defeat upon his command, if he fails to sound the  
proper note of warning, the friends, wives and children of those  
brave men whose lives he permits to remain thus in peril, will accuse  
him while he lives, and stand swift witnesses of wrath against him  
in the day when all shall be tried.

If my suspicions are unfounded, let my friendship for you  
and my zeal for my country be my excuse for this letter; and if they  
are correctly founded, and you determine not to heed the admoni-  
tions and prayers of this hasty note, by immediately ceasing to touch  
a single drop of any kind of liquor, no matter by whom asked or  
under what circumstances, let my immediate relief from duty in this  
department be the result. I am, General,

Yours respectfully,  
JOHN A. RAWLINS.<sup>1</sup>

From the fact that Grant did not resent this and from  
the terms of his letter of recommendation for Rawlins's pro-  
motion—"He comes the nearest being indispensable to me  
of any officer in the service"<sup>2</sup>—it is quite generally argued  
that Rawlins was instrumental in keeping Grant away from  
the misuse of alcohol and in assuring his total abstinence  
from it from that time until the siege of Petersburg, when

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, pp. 128-29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.



General Smith is accused of giving him too much to drink in order to blackmail him afterwards.<sup>3</sup>

The rumors of Grant's drinking are out of all proportion to recorded events. Throughout the war and many years of peace Grant displayed physical, mental, and moral energy such as has seldom been equaled and probably never excelled.

If Grant had been given to heavy drinking, he would have justified the reply that Lincoln is supposed to have made to a delegation demanding Grant's dismissal because he drank whisky: "Find out what kind he drinks and I will send a barrel to my other generals." It is an old saw which has gone through several metamorphoses. The best one is that King George II of England replied to a delegation protesting that General Wolfe was mad: "I hope he bites all my other generals." The story has been told with better cause about General Blücher, who was afflicted with hallucinations.

As soon as the siege was ended Grant broached a plan of operation which he thought would quickly finish the war and which he always wished to carry out but was never allowed to do, namely, to land his army at Mobile and advance against Atlanta. He believed that this would speedily compel the abandonment of that point and cut the Confederacy again as he had cut it down the line of the Mississippi.

The Mobile plan would have turned the defenses of the Tennessee River and the Appalachian Mountains as the Grand Gulf manœuvre had turned the Mississippi River and the Vicksburg defenses. Grant had slipped past the enemy defenses into a sensitive spot in the Vicksburg campaign, dislocated the defending forces, and forced the enemy to move against him without studied plans and without any idea what he (Grant) was doing.

It differed from Pakenham's attack on New Orleans in 1815 and McClellan's advance on Richmond in that it con-

<sup>3</sup> *The Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General B. F. Butler*, p. 696.

templated manœuvres of widest extent, as in Mississippi, rather than direct advances of limited radius, which Pakenham undertook because of his confidence in the efficacy of bayonet assault, and to which McClellan confined himself because of constitutional timidity.

The Washington authorities declined Grant's advice and instead divided his army among several generals who had idled the time away while Grant was winning his celebrated victories. Diplomatic reasons—that France and England were threatening to occupy Texas—are generally accepted as the ones that dictated this policy. A more likely reason will be found in the jealousy aroused by Grant's renewed fame, both military and political—jealousy and fame similar to those which followed the great victory at Donelson. Halleck had more reason for apprehension than before. Grant was the only major-general in the regular army who had won his rank in battle. He and Halleck were the only major-generals of the regular army in active duty.

Grant was left in idleness, discontent, and possibly dissipation while his troops were sent elsewhere. He visited New Orleans and, while reviewing the Seventeenth Corps which had been sent to Banks' army, was badly injured by a horse which bolted with him. While he was in bed suffering intensely, Rosecrans' defeat at Chickamauga caused the supreme command to call him back to Nashville.

During his campaign against Vicksburg he had been greatly handicapped by lack of coöperation from the neighboring armies and had suggested to General Halleck that all the armies west of the Alleghenies be placed under a single commander. Halleck had wished to retain the pleasure and glory of directing all the armies from Washington, and he refused. Instead, he himself ordered the combined move of Grant and Banks, which was saved from failure only by Grant's genius. He now ordered Rosecrans and Burnside to manœuver in concert against the Tennessee River line at Chattanooga and Knoxville.

freesboro the previous December and had been prevented from retreating from the battle-field only by the earlier retreat of the Confederates, had, with the support of his generals, including Sheridan in his disobedience, obstinately refused to move during Grant's campaign. Now, spurred on perhaps by Grant's promotion to the rank of major-general in the regular army, he finally started upon a campaign of his own.

Grant had placed a great river at his back as the only way to get at his enemy. Rosecrans, from fear of battle, manœvered forward until, with the river at his back and the enemy interposed between him and Burnside, he was surprised by the enemy's sudden attack upon his three widely scattered army-corps. Compelled to accept battle out of hand, he despaired of success as his troops fell back, left the field, and retreated into Chattanooga with two of his corps-commanders.

Of the higher officers, General Thomas, whose mastery in the council of war held before the battle had contributed to the defeat to the extent that it had secured an unbalanced proportion of the troops for the left flank, which he commanded, and fatally weakened the right flank, alone remained on the field and maintained his lines until joined by General Granger coming to the sound of battle without orders. These two generals and their troops marched into Chattanooga the following morning unpursued.

General Sheridan, who commanded a division in the defeated part of the army and who of course did not leave the field but finally joined General Thomas on the left flank, believed that persistent, stubborn resistance followed by a counter-attack the next morning might have wrested such a victory as Grant had won at Donelson and Shiloh, an opinion shared by General Gordon Granger who contributed so much to saving the day.

Burnside had advanced through Cumberland Gap to Knoxville, lent no assistance to Rosecrans, and was involved in the latter's collapse. Now too weak to act alone,

he was cut off by Bragg's army, besieging Chattanooga, which held the only railroad line connecting him with the Government, while winter weather made the wagon-roads to the rear impassable. Previous improvidence had left him short of ammunition and dependent upon the charity of the loyal mountaineers of Tennessee and North Carolina for supplies.

Rosecrans having shut himself up in Chattanooga, Bragg took an extended position around the city from the Tennessee River on the east near South Chickamauga Creek to the river west of the city at Moccasin Point. He was astride the railroad between Rosecrans and Burnside and, more important still, astride the railroad between Chattanooga and Nashville. He also controlled the river between Chattanooga and Bridgeport, where the Chattanooga-Nashville railroad crossed the river, which city remained in control of the Union army. He even raided the almost impassable roads behind the Union army. In trying to haul supplies to the beleaguered troops, all the draft-horses of Rosecrans' and Burnside's armies died of starvation, leaving the men in immediate danger of a similar fate or surrender, for it was impracticable to retire over the winter roads. Rosecrans, however, contemplated retreat, as at Murfreesboro, but as his indecision had given the enemy time to anticipate him then, it gave Grant time to remove him now.

Grant's assignment to report to Nashville was supposed to be for the limited purpose of forwarding troops to reinforce Rosecrans and seemingly was considered derogatory to the victor of Vicksburg, for Sherman urged him to accept in the following note:

Accept the command of the great army of the centre; don't hesitate. By your presence *at Nashville* you will unite all discordant elements, and impress the enemy in proportion. All success and honor to you! <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, I, 455.

And again on the fifteenth one that affords a port-hole view of disharmonies in high place not publicly acknowledged:

I am very anxious you should go to Nashville, as foreshadowed by Halleck, and chiefly as you can harmonize all conflicts of feeling that may exist in that vast crowd. Rosecrans and Burnside and Sherman, with their subordinates, would be ashamed of petty quarrels, if you were *behind* and near them, between them and Washington. Next, the union of such armies, and the direction of it, is worthy your ambition. I shall await news from you with great anxiety.<sup>5</sup>

Grant met Secretary of War Stanton at Louisville and learned that the Department of the Mississippi, including all the troops between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi except Banks's command, which Halleck continued to toy with, had been united under his command. He was given the option of retaining Rosecrans in charge of the Army and Department of the Cumberland or of replacing him with Thomas. He chose the latter.

Sherman evidently had expected that Grant's most active work would be to send orders to the armies from Nashville, but before Grant had time to give a night's thought to his new duties word came from Dana at Chattanooga that Rosecrans planned to retreat. Immediately Grant relieved Rosecrans, ordered Thomas to hold Chattanooga until he arrived, and started for the front. Thomas' famous answer, "I will hold the town till we starve," indicates his determination to resist but does not indicate any dynamic purpose to extricate himself.

Asking for the assignment of Sherman to his old command and ordering him to march to Chattanooga, Grant, starting for Chattanooga, directed Burnside to increase his munition supply . . . memories of Monterey, Donelson, and Shiloh.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

General Hooker had arrived at Bridgeport a week before Grant as commander of the two army-corps sent by Secretary Stanton from the Army of the Potomac *after* Chickamauga. He had made a brilliant reputation as division- and corps-commander in that army. He had been critical of General Burnside and insubordinate, and had been appointed commander of the army in spite of his character and political activities. Relieved from command after the battle of Chancellorsville, he was now reëmployed and again commanded General O. O. Howard, who shared with him the ignominy of that catastrophe.

As a past commander of the largest of the Union armies, Hooker seems to have resented his subordination to General Grant or to have sought to establish an ascendancy over him, for, upon the latter's arrival at Bridgeport, instead of calling upon his new commander as military custom demanded, under the pretense of illness he sent a carriage to bring Grant to his, Hooker's, headquarters—an extraordinary breach of military etiquette. Grant so sternly reprimanded him that he was a docile subordinate when dread of his commander was needed to make him carry out the order he feared more than any he ever received and more than the enemy he was instructed to defy.

From Bridgeport Grant rode on horseback sixty miles to Chattanooga, still so lame that he was carried by his men around portions of the trail that horses could not be trusted to pass over.

General Thomas, whose success at Mill Springs, it will be remembered, was eclipsed by Grant's victories at forts Henry and Shiloh, who had been given command of most of Grant's army after Shiloh, who had saved the Army of the Cumberland after Rosecrans had fled from the field, did not ride out to meet the man who had made him commander of that army—and who had then immediately taken over the command in person. Quite the contrary; Wilson thus describes Grant's arrival at Thomas' headquarters:

Oct. 23,  
1863

Grant, wet and weary, reached town between eight and nine o'clock at night, and of course went directly to Thomas' headquarters. I got in from my work a little later and found the two generals seated on the opposite sides of a blazing wood fire, a little puddle of water under Grant's chair and his clothes steaming from the heat. They were both silent and grave. Rawlins, whom I had shaken hands with as I was going in, was white with anger at the cool reception the general and staff had received. They had made a long and tiresome ride and were soaking wet, but as yet nothing had been done to relieve their discomfort. They had found shelter but apparently nothing more. It is a fact worth recording that neither he [Grant] nor Rawlins ever quite forgot the frigidity of their reception.<sup>6</sup>

Rebuffed by the general he had promoted, Grant turned for information and suggestion to Brigadier-General W. F. Smith, a brilliant blackguard who held the post of chief engineer of the army, an assignment which then entailed many of the duties now devolving upon the operations-section of the general staff. Smith had been actively at work during Rosecrans' lethargy of despair and now presented a plan which Rosecrans had suggested to Grant, whom he had visited on the train at Stevenson, and which Thomas had approved—but had not put into effect.

On the day after his arrival Grant, in company with Thomas and Smith, reconnoitered the ground as far as he could ride and immediately issued orders for the operation.

That Rosecrans' failure to act during the thirty days he had lain at Chattanooga and the week Hooker had been at Bridgeport and that Thomas' failure to put the plan into effect during the days of his absolute command were due to its desperate character is evidenced by Hooker's reaction to the order, as described by Howard:

I never saw Hooker apparently so apprehensive of disaster [and Howard had been with him at Chancellorsville]. He said, "Why,

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-66.

Howard, Longstreet is up on that Lookout range with at least ten thousand fighting men. We will be obliged to make a flank march along the side and base of the mountain. I shall have scarcely so many men, and must take care of my trains. It is a very hazardous operation, and almost certain to procure us a defeat.”<sup>7</sup>

Howard adds, giving his own opinion:

A few days later, after a nearer survey of the country around Chattanooga, I saw that Hooker had good reasons for his surmises; for Lookout was like the Grecian Acropolis at Athens—a place for the most extended observations, quite unassailable if defended by a few men well posted, and fine grounds for well-chosen sorties.<sup>8</sup>

The plan was dangerous and complicated, involving, among other movements, a night march by Hooker’s corps from Stevenson to Whiteside, a secret march by General Palmer’s corps west along the north side of the Chattanooga River, and a crossing to the south side of the river at Whiteside to take a position in Hooker’s rear after Hooker had passed that point. Since these forces would not be strong enough to defend themselves if attacked by Bragg’s whole force, a body of eighteen hundred men in sixty pontoon-boats under command of General W. F. Smith had to be floated down the river, landed on the southern shore and put a pontoon-bridge in place at Brown’s Ferry so that in case of need Hooker’s force could be reinforced from the main army.

Hooker and Howard, obeying a general they feared more than they feared the enemy, then carried out their orders without meeting opposition.

The next day Longstreet moved down the south side of the river, crossed Lookout Mountain, and attacked Hooker’s troops, now at Wauhatchie, only to meet repulse and to find that Howard and Hooker fighting under Grant were different men from Howard fighting under Hooker.

The evolutions, conceived by a staff-officer, which opened the line of supplies to Bridgeport, and the Vicksburg cam-

<sup>7</sup> Quoted from A. L. Conger, *The Rise of U. S. Grant*, p. 297.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



paign, planned entirely by himself, make it so plain that when no other methods were possible, Grant could carry out hazardous and brilliant expedients that the writers who have criticized him as dull for taking the plodding but sure way to victory when it was open to him stand self-exposed as untruthful or incompetent.

Although his main object was defeated, Bragg still sat in the master's seat, occupying the supposedly impregnable position of Missionary Ridge, with his right flank protected by the Chattanooga River and his left flank by Lookout Mountain. His main army lay across the railroad that led to his base of supplies at Atlanta and to Knoxville, and he still thought that he could maintain this position and capture Burnside's army by starvation.

An inexcusable delay in supplying Thomas' army with horses worked to Bragg's advantage. The teams of Hooker's corps were sufficient only to haul the rations and ammunition for Grant's entire force while acting as a garrison. When Grant ordered Thomas to attack Bragg's outworks and attach his mules and the officers' horses to the guns, he declared them too few for this service.

President Lincoln, now obsessed with the fate of Burnside and the loyal people of eastern Tennessee, bombarded Grant daily and sometimes several times a day with appeals to come to their assistance. Grant's power to appreciate the enemy's difficulties and to act upon them was not given scope because of this pressure. He was compelled to direct and limit his movements to the prime requisite of rescuing Burnside at sacrifice of greater considerations.

By the first day of November Grant's forethought and Sherman's energy had brought his reinforcements so far along the road that Bragg no longer trusted to starvation to capture Burnside. He detached General Longstreet with three divisions, and afterwards General Buckner with one division, to take Knoxville and its garrison by assault and then return and unite in defense of the Missionary Ridge position. In consequence, there ensued a race between

Nov. 1,  
1863

Nov. 13,  
1863  
Nov. 14,  
1863

Longstreet and Sherman and between Bragg and Grant as to whether the attack on Burnside could succeed before an attack could be made upon Bragg. On the thirteenth of November Longstreet was at Loudon, and the next day Sherman reached Bridgeport, with his army marching along the bank close behind, while his supplies accompanied him by river.

Grant had now perfected a plan much admired by the Germans and called by them "double envelopment" and "Cannae"; and a veritable Cannae it turned out to be.

A glance at the map will show the Tennessee River flowing west, receiving the waters of North Chickamauga Creek from the north and of Chickamauga Creek from the south, curving north around Chattanooga, then southerly to the base of Lookout Mountain, and finally north and northwest around Moccasin Point to pass behind Raccoon Mountain. Missionary Ridge extends from Chickamauga Creek south for many miles.

When Grant came to Chattanooga, the Union lines formed a flat arc between the southerly bends of the river. Bragg held Missionary Ridge and a fortified line from it across Chattanooga Valley to Lookout Mountain, which he also occupied. From both elevations he looked down on the Union defenses, but north of the river were high hills concealing valleys in their rear.

After opening his line of supplies, Grant kept Hooker's two corps on the foothills of Raccoon Mountain, guarding it, and the Army of the Cumberland in its trenches, re-equipping, reorganizing, and regaining its morale.

The road from Chattanooga to Knoxville runs through a tunnel under Missionary Ridge, which was Bragg's main position, fortified at the base, half-way up the slope, and at the crest and covered with a vast artillery which could not only fire over its own infantry but held an enormous advantage of range and observation over the Union artillery below. It was better placed to support an attack than

to fire effectively in defense against attack, as its plunging fire did not sweep the ground in its front.

Hooker's two corps protecting the "cracker line" were separated from the rest of the army and from Missionary Ridge by the defenses of Lookout Mountain. Thomas' troops were shut in between their own trenches and the river on both flanks.

The only attacks possible from these lines were simple assaults, which could not hope to succeed. Grant, therefore, decided to turn both of Bragg's flanks, and in order to do so he had recourse to a variety of those manœuvres and deceptions in which he was so fertile.

First he brought Howard's corps across the Brown's Ferry bridge and camped it out of sight. Sherman's army, less Osterhaus's division which made a demonstration toward Lookout Mountain, then passed over the bridge and disappeared behind the hills, and Howard's troops reappeared, crossed the river into Chattanooga, and entered the defenses.

It was on November 20th that the first of Sherman's troops reached Brown's Ferry and word was received that the attack on Knoxville had begun. All that day and the next day they filed over the bridge, swaying in high flood-waters caused by heavy rain that turned the roads into quagmires. A fleet of pontoons was collected in North Chickamauga Creek to repeat the Brown's Ferry stratagem—to ferry troops to a point north of Missionary Ridge, establish a bridge-head, and lay a bridge for Sherman's army to outflank that massif.

Nov. 20,  
1863

Nov. 21,  
1863

On the twenty-first the pontoons in North Chickamauga Creek were ready—but Sherman was not. On the twenty-second Grant learned that Buckner's division had gone to join the attack on Burnside and that another was hovering between the two Confederate forces. Therefore, to hold troops away from Longstreet, on the twenty-third Grant made the only move open to him. He advanced Sheridan's

Nov. 22,  
1863

Nov. 23,  
1863

and Wood's division of Granger's corps and Baird's division of Palmer's corps a mile forward in the direction of Missionary Ridge and occupied Bragg's advanced trenches.

This move, calling attention to the center, facilitated the night expedition of General Giles A. Smith, which crossed the Tennessee River in the pontoons and effected a lodgment at the north end of Missionary Ridge. Pontoon-bridges were laid across the river and South Chickamauga Creek, and by early afternoon Sherman's army was across Bragg's right flank and rear and between him and Knoxville.

On the right flank, Grant's first plan for Hooker was to pass between the river and the top of Lookout Mountain and to strike Missionary Ridge at Rossville. His later plan for passing Lookout Mountain had been to bring Hooker's force into Chattanooga and to debouch from there across Chattanooga Creek and take the fortifications in reverse. The high water in the Tennessee River prevented this crossing, so that he was compelled to revert to the earlier plan and attack the mountain from the north.

Hooker's two corps and Osterhaus's corps of Sherman's army were therefore ordered to join the right of the line by forcing a crossing of Lookout Creek and driving the enemy from the slope of Lookout Mountain. Hooker seized the bridge near the mouth of the creek and crossed the larger part of his force. He also sent General Geary's corps, stationed at Wauhatchie, to outflank the defenders.

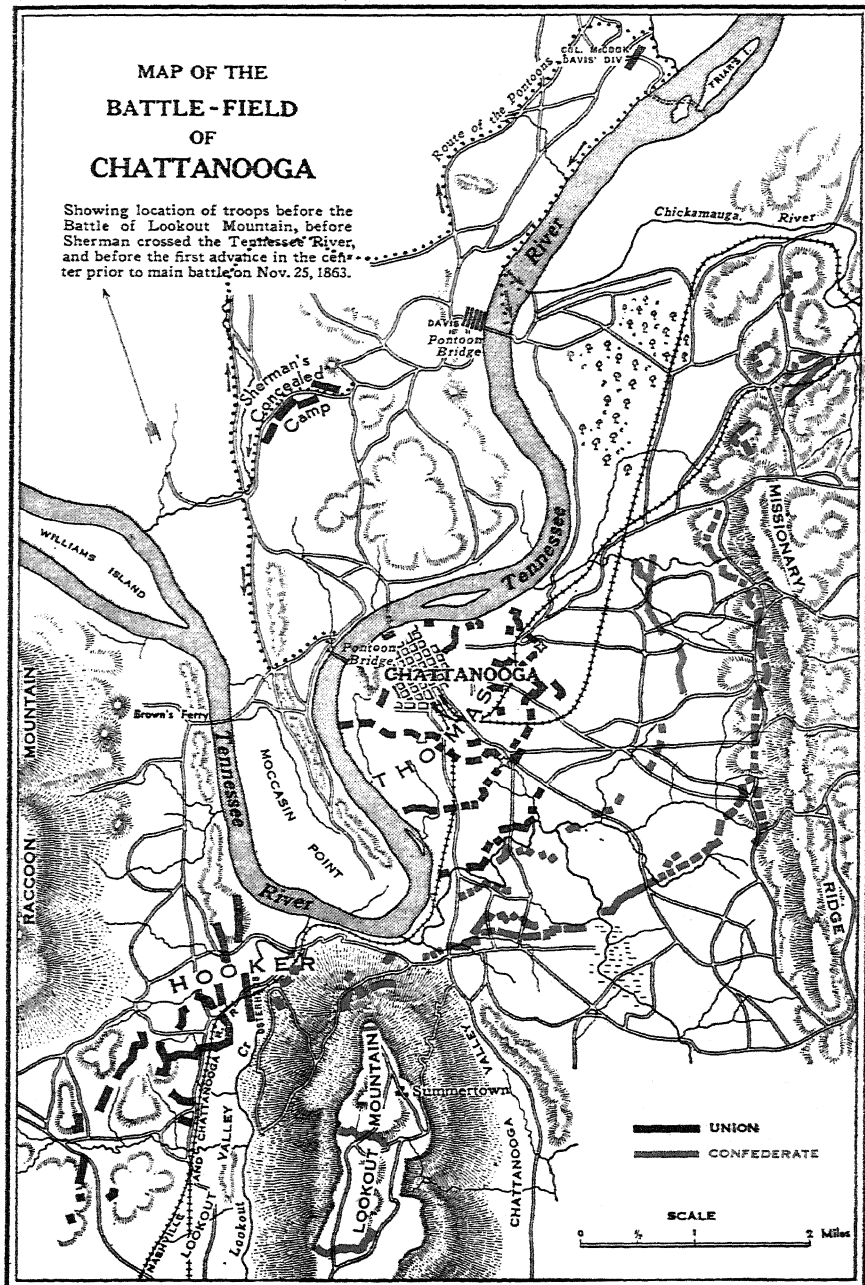
Nov. 24,  
1863

The orders were executed with celerity and energy and were entirely successful. By evening the enemy were driven from the north and east slopes of the mountain. Hooker's line extended from the foot of the palisade at the top to the river, and Grant sent General Carlin's brigade from Chattanooga along the south bank of the Tennessee River to join Hooker. His right flank was now out of its pocket and threatening Bragg's left.

During the fighting several mists, normal to the locality, blew around Lookout Mountain, sometimes covering the

# MAP OF THE BATTLE-FIELD OF CHATTANOOGA

Showing location of troops before the Battle of Lookout Mountain, before Sherman crossed the Tennessee River, and before the first advance in the center prior to main battle on Nov. 25, 1863.





top and sometimes the base. At times only Hooker's troops at the top of the slope were visible to Grant on Orchard Knob. This led to the poetic designation of the action as "the battle above the clouds," and this in turn to the inference that the palisade at the top of the mountain had been taken by escalade.

With Sherman across the river and reinforced by Hovey, and with Hooker on Lookout Mountain and joined by Carlin, Grant was ready to deliver his classic battle. It was to be both a "double envelopment"—for Sherman and Hooker were to turn the two ends of Missionary Ridge—and an "oblique" attack, for Sherman was to open the battle with three divisions of his own army, with General Davis of Palmer's corps, and the bulk of the artillery. Hooker was to follow with three divisions on the right, and then, when "the battle was ripe,"<sup>9</sup> Thomas was to pierce the center with three divisions.

Sherman, always punctual, started at daylight and battled all day. He was handicapped by finding a gully between him and the intrenched enemy, apparently unexpected, though visible from the north side of the river. The enemy, moreover, had been reinforced during the previous day and night.

Educated, imaginative, intelligent, energetic, a capable organizer and rapid marcher, Sherman showed that he was not a battle-soldier even when serving under the eye of the master. His grand flank-attack which had been so carefully prepared failed completely.

Hooker also started on time from Lookout Mountain and, his opponents having withdrawn, made an unopposed march to Rossville. The bridge over Chattanooga Creek had been burned, and he wasted four precious hours in front of this minor obstruction, waiting for the bridge to be repaired, before he had his infantry ford the creek, leaving his artillery to await the completion of the bridge.

Grant, Thomas, and Granger, the latter commanding the

<sup>9</sup> A phrase of Napoleon's.

only corps left to Thomas, watched Sherman's battle on the left and watched vainly for Hooker's appearance on the mountains to the right.

At half past three it looked like a repulse, and Grant ordered in his last reserve—Wood's and Sheridan's divisions. The order was also taken to Baird's division, which Grant had moved from the right of Granger's corps to the left to aid Sherman but which was not yet engaged.

How Wood rode up the hill at the head of his men and how Sheridan led the chase, brandy-flask in hand, has often been well told. The resistance was trifling. All day the defenders had heard the battle rage on their right flank; they had seen Hooker's troops pass their left flank and get in their rear. Their apprehensions had mastered them. The Confederates were like the Romans at Cannae:

Everywhere, in front, to the right, to the left, in the rear, the Roman soldiers heard the furious clamor of combat. The physical pressure was unimportant. The moral pressure was enormous. Uneasiness, then terror, took hold of them; the first ranks, fatigued or wounded, wanted to retreat; but the last ranks, frightened, withdrew, gave way. Demoralized and not feeling themselves supported, the ranks engaged followed them. "The weapons fell from their hands," says Polybius.<sup>10</sup>

No greater example exists of a commander persisting with a perfect plan in face of discouraging events. Grant's plan had been delayed by the weather; troops were kept from their destination by a broken bridge and their employment had to be improvised. Both flank attacks failed, and victory came by the engagement of the last reserve.<sup>11</sup> The Confederate troops in the center had been shaken by

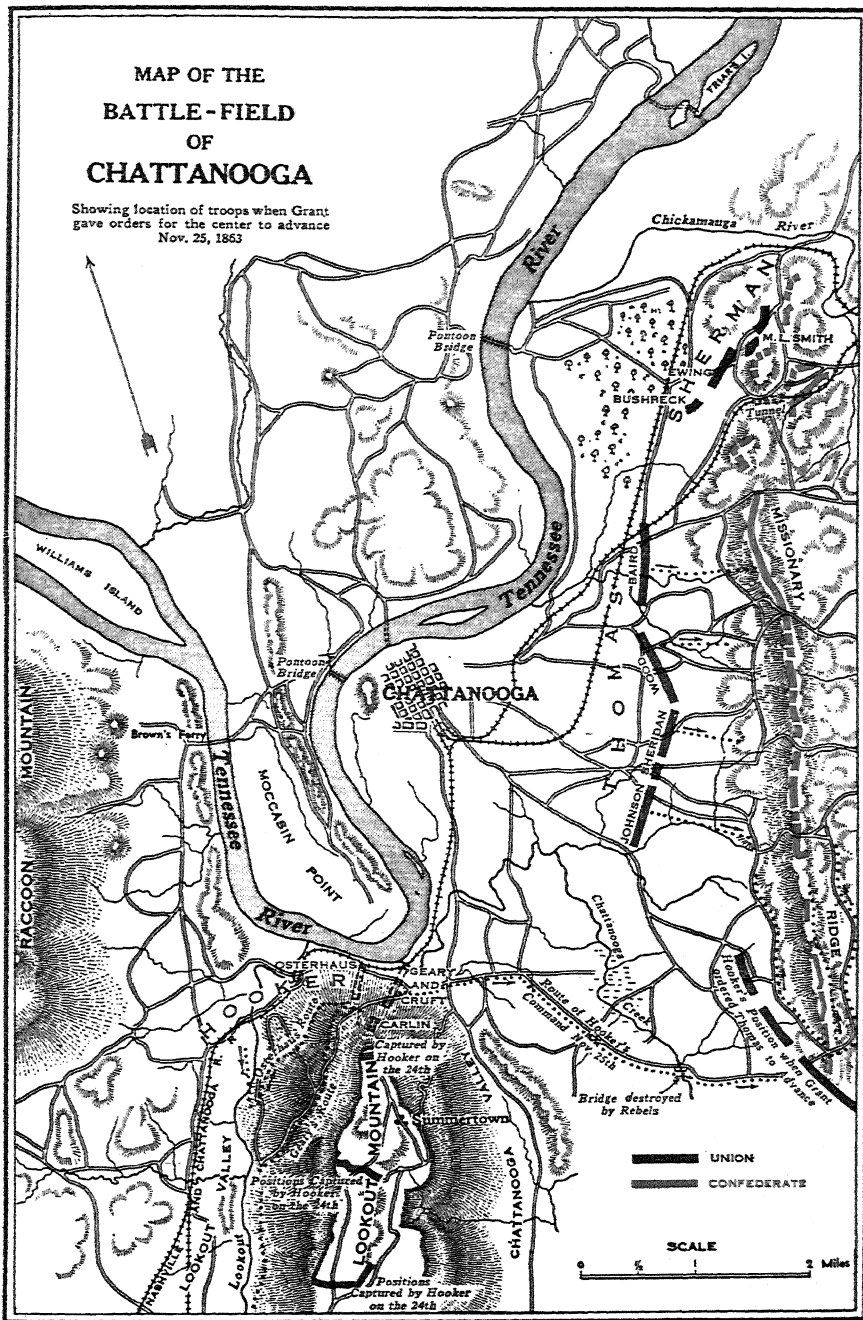
<sup>10</sup> C. J. du Picq, *Battle Studies*, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> There is a similarity in the crisis confronting Grant at three o'clock on November 24, 1862, and the one facing Napoleon at seven o'clock on June 15, 1815. Each had attacked his enemy and had failed to beat him. At Chattanooga Grant put in his last man and won a war; at Waterloo Napoleon held out a fraction of his reserve and lost—the world.



# MAP OF THE BATTLE-FIELD OF CHATTANOOGA

Showing location of troops when Grant  
gave orders for the center to advance  
Nov. 25, 1863





the noise of battle on their right-rear and the approach of a column on their left-rear. Their determination failed and the assault succeeded.

Grant pursued the enemy in utter rout for two days as far as Chickamauga Station. He could undoubtedly have pushed on to Atlanta and made Confederate resistance in 1864 impossible. Instead, he was required by Lincoln's orders to retrace his steps and open the road to Burnside, besieged but not in danger at Knoxville.

Thus for a fourth time Grant was prevented by his superiors from exploiting a decisive victory.

Bragg had as much experience as any general in the Confederacy up to that time. A regular officer and a veteran of the Mexican War, he had fought at Shiloh, had run Buell back to Cincinnati and fought the drawn battle of Stone River with him before retiring into the Tennessee Valley. He had come near to overwhelming Rosecrans at Murfreesboro, and at Chickamauga he had won the greatest Confederate victory of the war. That he did not turn it into another Ulm (for Metz and Sedan were yet to come) was due to Grant.

From the Battle of Chickamauga to the Battle of Chattanooga Bragg held the initiative. His dispositions President Davis had described as

these dispositions, faithfully sustained, insured the enemy's speedy evacuation of Chattanooga for want of food and forage. Possessed of the shortest route to his depot, and the one by which reinforcements must reach him, we held him at our mercy, and his destruction was only a question of time.<sup>12</sup>

They held Rosecrans. That they were correct in the conception of ordinary generals is shown by Hooker's and Howard's terrified reaction to the plan Grant ordered to break them.

Bragg had made his dispositions to hold Grant at Mis-

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, I, 507.

sionary Ridge and overwhelm Burnside, acting upon the highly approved military principle of "economy of forces." He was totally defeated, of course, by Grant's vast activity, breadth of battle-planning, and lion-hearted executions. Perhaps Bragg's mistake was to accept the popular version of the Battle of Shiloh rather than judge his opponent by his own experience with Grant on that deadly day.

There was a great deal of hard feeling in the Army of the Cumberland against General Grant for assuming command in person at Chattanooga and for giving later what was considered the important manœuvre to General Sherman and the Army of the Tennessee.

Thomas' position as army and district commander under the immediate command of Grant must have been distasteful, and he displayed no zeal in it. General Thomas exhibited this distaste on Grant's arrival and made a direct report to General Halleck of the operations opening connections with Bridgeport.<sup>13</sup> There was further misunderstanding between them concerning the order to attack Missionary Ridge. His location beside Grant on Kettle Hill during the two days' battle, while his subordinate, Hooker, was entrusted with one manœuvring wing and Sherman with the other, was

<sup>13</sup> *War of the Rebellion*, LIV, 41:

CHATTANOOGA, TENN. October 28, 1863—11 P. M.

[Received October 29th, 3 P. M.]

Hooker reached Brown's Ferry to-day about 3 P. M. Met with no serious opposition. The enemy still hold Lookout Mountain in considerable force. The wagon road is now open to Bridgeport. We have, besides, two steam-boats, one at Bridgeport and one here, which will be started to-morrow. We have also another steam-boat here, undergoing repairs; will be ready for work as soon as portions of her machinery (sent for to Nashville) arrive. By this operation we have gained two wagon roads and the river to get supplies by, and I hope in a few days to be pretty well supplied. Intend to repair roads leading to Tracy City and McMinnville, two termini of branch railroads. The importance of the position of Chattanooga is too great to neglect any means of supplying or re-enforcing it.

GEO. H. THOMAS,

*Major-General, Commanding.*

MAJ. GEN. H. W. HALLECK,  
*General in Chief.*

humiliating. Apparently he sulked when Grant considerably couched in colloquial form the first order to attack Missionary Ridge. A whole hour was lost before Grant, learning that his order had not been passed on, repeated it in a tone of severe reprimand.

General Granger offended Grant by his personal conduct in the latter's presence during the early stages of the battle, by his conduct of the pursuit, and by his delay in going to the assistance of General Burnside afterwards.

When his troops actually carried out the decisive manœuvre after Sherman and Hooker had failed, controversies and recriminations arose between the "lower-downs," although no such event as McClernand's congratulatory order took place. As we shall see later, Granger was to be removed from his command the following year, and in the course of the war Thomas was to be over-sloughed<sup>14</sup> by Sherman, Meade, and Sheridan.

General W. F. Smith received Grant's enthusiastic admiration at the time but, being relieved of another command later, became the principal calumniator of Grant's command at Chattanooga.

After relieving Knoxville, Grant moved back to Nashville and directed the movements of his forces from there, as seems to have been contemplated at the time of his appointment. He proposed a movement of Foster's (formerly Burnside's) force, reinforced from Thomas, against Longstreet at Strawberry Plains. He allowed Sherman to advance from Vicksburg against General Joseph Johnston at Meridian, and he ordered Thomas to attack Dalton in his front.

Little came of these plans. Foster persuaded Grant to abandon the campaign against Longstreet. Sherman marched to Meridian, did considerable damage to railroads and private property, and retreated without fighting a battle. Pleading lack of transport, Thomas failed either

<sup>14</sup> A military term meaning to be passed over in rank by a junior officer.

to support Foster or to act offensively with his own command. His tempo and Grant's were too far apart for synchronization.

Sherman, on the contrary, always pleased Grant because of his speed and ready obedience and in spite of his incapacity in battle. From this abortive winter campaign may be traced Grant's promotion of Sherman to the Department of the Mississippi, with command of one army-group, when he decided to direct the war from the East.

## CHAPTER VIII

### COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

THE three victories, in which Grant opened the communications of the Army of the Cumberland, then defeated Bragg at Missionary Ridge, and finally rescued Burnside, following the five successful battles that culminated in the capture of Vicksburg,<sup>1</sup> brought upon Grant such a blaze of glory as no American general has shone in before or since. Lincoln sent him a letter of thanks,<sup>2</sup> but, far from assigning him to Halleck's position, he refused for the second time to allow him to undertake the campaign from Mobile, which Grant always thought was the most desirable move to subdue the Confederacy.

Nov. 25,  
1863  
July 1,  
1863

We can imagine, if not the President, at least his political beneficiaries aghast at the arrival of a military hero on the scene just before a presidential campaign; and we can also visualize Stanton, Halleck, and the generals in the East, if not jealous of his success, certainly unwilling to be subjected to the authority of this military upstart whose promotions had all come either from political influence or from undetractable victories, and none from seniority or the advice of the military hierarchy.

It was Congressman Washburn, who had secured Grant's appointment as brigadier-general of volunteers from Illinois, who now introduced the bill that was to make him lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of the United States armies. Under the Constitution the bill could not name the general to be appointed, but every one knew that Grant was the man who was to be chosen; all the debates referred to Grant.

Aug. 7,  
1861

<sup>1</sup> Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion's Hill, and Black River Bridge.

<sup>2</sup> Dec. 8, 1863. *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, 32, footnote.

March 9,  
1864

Lincoln did not oppose or support the measure. His opposition probably could not have defeated it. His support would have expedited it. He might have anticipated it and appointed Grant commander-in-chief before its passage and so have saved precious days, but it was not until after the passage of the bill on February 26, 1864, that Lincoln nominated Grant lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief on March 1st, ordered him to Washington, and gave him his commission on March 9th. This left him only eight weeks in which to organize and regroup his armies and to plan and set into motion the most comprehensive campaign of all time.

From November 25th, when Chattanooga was fought, to March 9th, a period of more than three months had been wasted except insofar as Grant had used the time to study the duties and opportunities of the new rank to which it seemed he would succeed.

Richard H. Dana shows us Grant as he beheld him before he left finally for the field (in 1864), when his mind was engrossed with the great plans of the campaign:

“A short, round-shouldered man, in a very tarnished major-general’s uniform came up, and asked about his card for General Dana, which led me to look at him. There was nothing marked in his appearance. He had no gait, no station, no manner, rough, light-brown whiskers, a blue eye, and rather a scrubby look withal. A crowd formed round him; men looked, stared at him, as if they were taking his likeness, and two generals were introduced. Still, I could not get his name. It was not Hooker. Who could it be? He had a cigar in his mouth, and rather the look of a man who did, or once did, take a little too much to drink. I inquired of the bookkeeper. ‘That is General Grant.’ I joined the starers. I saw that the ordinary, scrubby-looking man, with a slightly seedy look, as if he was out of office and on half pay, and nothing to do but hang round the entry of Willard’s, cigar in mouth, had a clear blue eye, and a look of resolution, as if he could not be trifled with, and an entire indifference to the crowd about him. Straight nose, too. Still, to see him talking and smoking in the lower entry of Willard’s, in that crowd, in such times,—the generalissimo of our armies, on whom the destiny of the empire seemed to hang!”



The next morning Dana, having met Grant at breakfast, thus completes his account: "He was just leaving the table, and going to the front for the great movement. I said, 'I suppose, General, you don't mean to breakfast again until the war is over.' 'Not here, I sha'n't.' He gets over the ground queerly. He does not march, nor quite walk, but pitches along as if the next step would bring him on his nose. But his face looks firm and hard, and his eye is clear and resolute, and he is certainly natural, and clear of all appearance of selfconsciousness!"<sup>3</sup>

The author of *Two Years Before the Mast* appears to have obtained his ideas of correct dress and deportment for generals from Meissonier's pictures.

We have seen the exigencies that led Grant to take command of the armies on the Mississippi and of the Army of the Cumberland at Chattanooga, superseding McClellan and Thomas. He now had to decide where to exercise the functions of commander-in-chief.

That he did not want to command the Army of the Potomac after he had become the ranking general in the field but before he was given the responsibility for conducting the whole war is shown in a letter to Congressman Washburn, who proposed such a move after the capture of Vicksburg:

My going could do no possible good. They have there able officers who have been brought up with that army; and to import a commander to place over them, certainly could produce no good.

Aug. 30,  
1863

Whilst I would not positively disobey an order, I would have objected most vehemently to taking that command, or any other, except the one I have. I can do more with this army than it would be possible for me to do with any other, without time to make the same acquaintance with others I have with this. I know that the soldiers of the Army of the Tennessee can be relied on to the fullest extent. I believe I know the exact capacity of every general in my command to command troops, and just where to place them to get from them their best services. This is a matter of no small consequence.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> From James Ford Rhodes, *History of the Civil War*, p. 305.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Albert D. Richardson, *Personal History of U. S. Grant*, p. 345.

Grant records that at the time of his appointment he expected to remain in the West and conquer the Confederacy from there. Sherman encouraged him to do this. Motivated no doubt by loyalty and by a certain dismay at the responsibility that would devolve upon him if Grant moved his headquarters eastward, Sherman, in answer to a letter from Grant thanking him and McPherson for their help in his success, expressed his views in one of the most remarkable letters ever written:

NEAR MEMPHIS, March 10, 1864

GENERAL GRANT

DEAR GENERAL: I have your more than kind and characteristic letter of the 4th, and will send a copy of it to General McPherson at once.

You do yourself injustice and us too much honor in assigning to us so large a share of the merits which have led to your high advancement. I know you approve the friendship I have ever professed to you, and will permit me to continue as heretofore to manifest it on all proper occasions.

You are now Washington's legitimate successor, and occupy a position of almost dangerous elevation; but if you can continue as heretofore to be yourself, simple, honest, and unpretending, you will enjoy through life the respect and love of friends, and the homage of millions of human beings who will award to you a large share for securing to them and their descendants a government of law and stability.

I repeat, you do General McPherson and myself too much honor. At Belmont you manifested your traits, neither of us being near; at Donelson also you illustrated your whole character. I was not near, and General McPherson in too subordinate a capacity to influence you.

Until you had won Donelson, I confess I was almost cowed by the terrible array of anarchical elements that presented themselves at every point; but that victory admitted the ray of light which I have followed ever since.

I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just, as the great prototype Washington; as unselfish, kindhearted, and honest, as a man should be; but the chief characteristic in your nature is the simple faith in success you have always manifested, which I can

liken to nothing else than the faith a Christian has in his Saviour.

This faith gave you victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Also, when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation, as at Chattanooga—no doubts, no reserve; and I tell you that it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew wherever I was that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come—if alive.

My only points of doubts were as to your knowledge of grand strategy, and of books of science and history; but I confess your common-sense seems to have supplied all this.

Now as to the future. Do not stay in Washington. Halleck is better qualified than you are to stand the buffets of intrigue and policy. Come out West; take to yourself the whole Mississippi Valley; let us make it dead-sure, and I tell you the Atlantic slope and Pacific shores will follow its destiny as sure as the limbs of a tree live or die with the main trunk! We have done much; still much remains to be done. Time and time's influences are all with us; we could almost afford to sit still and let these influences work. Even in the seceded States your word *now* would go further than a President's proclamation, or an act of Congress.

For God's sake and for your country's sake, come out of Washington! I foretold to General Halleck, before he left Corinth, the inevitable result to him, and I now exhort you to come out West. Here lies the seat of the coming empire; and from the West, when our task is done, we will make short work of Charleston and Richmond, and the impoverished coast of the Atlantic. Your sincere friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.<sup>5</sup>

Explaining his change of plans, Grant writes in his *Memoirs*:

It had been my intention before this to remain in the West, even if I was made lieutenant-general; but when I got to Washington and saw the situation it was plain that here was the point for the commanding general to be. No one else could, probably, resist the pressure that would be brought to bear upon him to desist from his own plans and pursue others.<sup>6</sup>

That is unquestionably only a part of the story; the conversations between Grant and Lincoln have never been re-

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, I, 427-28.

<sup>6</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 45-46.

corded. We know that, following them, Grant abandoned his planned invasion of North Carolina, and, in issuing his orders to Meade—"Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes there you will go also"—assumed the language that President Lincoln had used to Hooker: "I think Lee's army and not Richmond is your sure objective point."<sup>7</sup>

Lincoln undoubtedly had told Grant his opinion of Meade's conduct after Gettysburg, which we know from the letter he addressed to Meade at that time:

July 14,  
1863

I have just seen your dispatch to General Halleck, asking to be relieved of your command because of a supposed censure of mine. I am very, very grateful to you for the magnificent success you gave the cause of the country at Gettysburg; and I am sorry now to be the author of the slightest pain to you. But I was in such deep distress myself that I could not restrain some expression of it. I have been oppressed nearly ever since the battles at Gettysburg by what appeared to be evidences that yourself and General [D. N.] Couch and General [W. F.] Smith were not seeking a collision with the enemy, but were trying to get him across the river without another battle. What these evidences were, if you please, I hope to tell you at some time when we shall both feel better. The case, summarily stated, is this: You fought and beat the enemy at Gettysburg; and, of course, to say the least, his loss was as great as yours. He retreated, and you did not, as it seemed to me, pressinglly pursue him: but a flood in the river detained him till, by slow degrees, you were again upon him. You had at least twenty thousand veteran troops directly with you, and as many more raw ones within supporting distance, all in addition to those who fought with you at Gettysburg; while it was not possible that he had received a single recruit; and yet you stood and let the flood run down, bridges be built, and the enemy move away at his leisure without attacking him. And Couch and Smith—the latter left Carlisle in time, upon all ordinary calculations, to have aided you in the last battle at Gettysburg, but he did not arrive. At the end of more than ten days, I believe twelve, under constant urging, he reached Hagerstown from

<sup>7</sup> Lincoln to Hooker, June 10, 1863. Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, VII, 208.

Carlisle, which is not an inch over fifty-five miles, if so much, and Couch's movement was very little different.

Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so south of the river, when you can take with you very few more than two-thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect [that] you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it.

I beg you will not consider this a prosecution or persecution of yourself. As you had learned that I was dissatisfied, I have thought it best to kindly tell you why.<sup>8</sup>

Jesse Grant, in his *Days of My Father, General Grant*, says that Grant believed that Lee only fought the Battle of Gettysburg in order to open his line of retreat, and that he therefore considered it a victory for Lee but accepted the popular verdict of a great Union victory. Jesse Grant also says that his father offered the command of the Army of the Potomac to General Ingalls, the quartermaster, who declined on the ground that Meade would function satisfactorily with Grant present and no one could replace Ingalls in his work. General Wilson, in his *Life of General W. F. Smith*, says that before visiting the East, Grant planned to appoint Smith to command of the Army of the Potomac. But he did not supplant Meade.

July 1-3,  
1863

There were, of course, many serious objections to the removal of Meade. He had all the strings of the army in his hand. The great Republican state of Pennsylvania would have been mortally offended by his removal. Meade was its favorite son and the hero who had saved it from invasion at Gettysburg. And whomever Grant might choose to replace him, there would be jealousy on the part of those who would have considered themselves slighted.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 280-81.

Furthermore, Lincoln's opponent for the presidency was General McClellan, another native of Pennsylvania. Suggestions that politics, civil or military, can be kept out of armies in war-time are puerile, for in such time military offices are the most desired, and military leaders are the cynosures of all eyes and subject to the loyalties and jealousies their positions inspire.

Meade was a man of superior intellect who learned easily from books. Well above the average in soldierly qualities, he performed the duties of all ranks up to corps-commander so well that Lincoln decided to try him out as commander of the Army of the Potomac. That this strain was beyond his capacity to stand is told in his correspondence after his appointment, by his halting conduct of the campaign and battle of Gettysburg, and failure to follow up that victory. How much he resented Grant's coming to command him, we do not know. To his wife he wrote: "You may look now for the Army of the Potomac putting laurels on the brow of another."<sup>9</sup> His offer to relinquish command in favor of some one closer to Grant may have indicated as much a desire for relief from a too heavy burden as unselfishness.

On the day after Grant received his commission he was with the Army of the Potomac where he met Meade, his staff, and the principal generals and their staffs.

The Army of the Potomac was the first army organized by the North. Upon it was showered the wealth of the nation and to it was sent the nation's military talent insofar as it could be ascertained. Almost all of the regular officers and the graduates of the West Point Military Academy were there, and the best of the arms and equipment.

Under the advice of Commander-in-Chief Scott, the Army of the Potomac first had been led to the battle of Bull Run by McDowell and Patterson, both of high standing before that day. As soon as McClellan's operations in West Virginia seemed to justify his high reputation in the regular

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from Louis A. Coolidge, *Ulysses S. Grant*, pp. 155-56.

army, he had been transferred to command the Army of the Potomac. After his failures and when Halleck and Pope had obtained credit for Grant's victories in the West, they were called to direct it. When Pope was defeated, three generals from the army were tried in succession—Burnside, Hooker, and Meade. The army had almost always been beaten—and not only by Lee, as tradition has it, because Beauregard commanded the Confederate force at Bull Run, and Johnston in the peninsula until he was wounded at his victory of Seven Pines.

Nov. 1,  
1861July 17,  
1862  
Sept. 1,  
1862June 1,  
1862

Undoubtedly Grant sensed in the commander and his aides that lack of confidence and aggressive spirit which was bound to affect an army that had been beaten so often and had never won a victory. It was plain that a stronger hand was needed to drive the Army of the Potomac than any that had held the reins so far. But other reasons required Grant's presence in the East.

Virginia had become the show-place of the war, and Lee had become a legend. If Grant failed to challenge this champion, millions on both sides of the conflict and in Europe would believe he was afraid to do so. His hard-won and invaluable prestige would wither in a day.

Finally, Burnside and Butler, whose armies were to be joined to the Army of the Potomac, were both senior to Meade, could not be commanded by him, and were clearly unfit to command the combined armies. However, during Grant's absences from the front and during quiet periods of trench warfare Butler did assume nominal command of the armies.<sup>10</sup>

McClellan had exercised the chief command and that of the Army of the Potomac at the same time. Halleck had been commander-in-chief with headquarters in Washington.

Grant decided to make his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, over which he would exercise close control while leaving the command to Meade. This procedure was

<sup>10</sup> *The Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General B. F. Butler*, p. 779.

unusual but was based upon sound reasoning. Grant did not know Meade's chief-of-staff, his staff, his army, or the terrain. It would be easier to give orders and exert pressure upon the commander than upon the subordinates. Finally, he had all the other armies to direct and had to maintain contact with the administration. If the relationship was not perfect, it was the best that could be devised. Of it he wrote in his *Memoirs*:

Meade's position afterward proved embarrassing to me, if not to him.

To avoid the necessity of having to give orders direct, I established my headquarters near his, unless there were reasons for locating them elsewhere. This sometimes happened, and I had on occasions to give orders direct to the troops affected.<sup>11</sup>

Halleck in Washington as chief-of-staff, as requested by President Lincoln, would attend to routine work and forward orders.

Grant had held Burnside accountable for the escape of Longstreet from Knoxville and had secured his relief from service under him in the West. Now he turned up in command of the Ninth Army Corps, which Grant planned to use with the Army of the Potomac. As Burnside was senior to Meade, Grant sent orders directly to him in the early days of the campaign; later Burnside cheerfully accepted service under Meade, but became almost mutinous under Meade's inconsiderate and ill-natured badgering, was reprimanded by a board of inquiry, and was finally relieved from command of his corps.

The army at Harper's Ferry was commanded by Franz Sigel, a German refugee of the War of 1848. He had served in the Prussian army and afterwards had conducted a military magazine in New York. With his knowledge of Clausewitz and his familiarity with the German general-staff system, he would be considered the most educated officer in the Union service according to its present doctrine.

<sup>11</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 47.



The Germans in America fought more to oppose slavery, which they hated, than to save the Union, in which they took little interest. Furthermore, they considered themselves then and long afterwards very much a state within a state. They had to be treated as such if their aid was to be secured, and they had to be given leaders of their own choosing.

In the World War, which is generally supposed to have been conducted on lines more in accordance with professional military practice, our Government recognized this principle as to colored troops, and Foch was forced to accept whatever generals the Allied Governments appointed to command their nationals.

The Army of the James was commanded by Major-General Benjamin Butler, a politician of great importance, violent loyalty, wide reading, and much ability. He had been appointed major-general early in the war, when the first two requisites were indispensable in enlisting the Union forces and combating treason and indecision at home. His whole career was filled with bitter controversy. He has been the object of more abuse than any other great figure in the war, partly because of his volunteer status and partly for cause given, and he has retorted in kind in *Butler's Book*. His two army-corps were commanded by generals Q. A. Gillmore and W. F. Smith.

On the other hand, in the Army of the Potomac the principle of professional command was carried to its logical extreme. Not only were the commander, Meade, his chief-of-staff, Humphreys, and the corps-commanders, Warren, Hancock, and Sedgwick, graduates of West Point, but the first three, with Wright, Sedgwick's successor, were members of the engineer-corps, then more than now the *crème de la crème* of the regular army. None of these generals, German or American, amateur or professional, commanded at the final scene.

Grant's promotion had led to great things for the other "Grant Men." McPherson had risen from junior corps-commander at Vicksburg to command of the Army of the

Tennessee; Logan to that of McPherson's army-corps. Rawlins now became chief-of-staff to the commander of all the armies in the United States, and Grant, with some difficulty, secured for him the appointment of brigadier-general in the regular army, which guarantee of income for life was greatly desired by the latter in his failing health. Comstock, Porter, and Badeau came to the new staff, and Comstock was to acquire great influence with his chief.

Meade had tactfully suggested that Grant might want to appoint Sherman or another Western general to command the Army of the Potomac, and Grant had replied that Sherman was needed elsewhere. Grant now gave Sherman the command he was leaving and gave him much greater freedom of action than he himself had enjoyed. Wilson was taken East, appointed brigadier-general, and assigned the command of a division of cavalry. Shortly afterwards Ord was transferred from New Orleans to an independent command in West Virginia; he received still more important promotions later. W. F. Smith was given command of a corps in the Army of the James, with the consent of General Butler. Grant had broken with McClernand and Prentiss, to their present and his future sorrow. He had never liked Thomas, of the Army of the Cumberland, or Granger, the most distinguished corps-commander.

Mar. 10,  
1864

Mar. 18,  
1864

April 17,  
1864

April 4,  
1864

Except for a change in the command of the cavalry, the entire higher command of the Army of the Potomac was left intact. Grant did not know General Pleasanton, who, under Meade's nervous command, had reduced it to a line of pickets. How and what new appointment was made, Grant describes as follows in his *Memoirs*:

In one of my early interviews with the President I expressed my dissatisfaction with the little that had been accomplished by the cavalry so far in the war, and the belief that it was capable of accomplishing much more that it had done if under a thorough leader. I said I wanted the very best man in the army for that command. Halleck was present and spoke up, saying, "How would Sheridan do?" I replied, "The very man I want." The President

said I could have anybody I wanted. Sheridan was telegraphed for that day, and on his arrival was assigned to the command of the cavalry corps with the Army of the Potomac.<sup>12</sup>

Mar. 23,  
1864

This super-Murat and super-d'Artagnan was born in Montreal, the son of immigrant parents. In later years, when a receptive candidate for the presidency, he adopted the birthplace of Albany, from which he was appointed to West Point. At the Military Academy he was among the lowest of his class, constantly in trouble, was almost criminally insubordinate and took five years to complete the four-year course. But all of his shortcomings were passed over by a far-sighted superintendent who correctly thought that he recognized a streak of genius in the malingerer.

1849-53

At the outbreak of the war Sheridan was successfully fighting Indians in Oregon. Transferred to the East as a subordinate quartermaster, he immediately quarreled with his superior and in consequence was transferred, fortunately for him, as a sort of majordomo to the headquarters of General Halleck. There again he quarreled with his superiors but so aroused their admiration as to receive appointment as colonel to a Michigan regiment, although it was against the regulations of the regular army to allow regular officers to accept state commissions at that time.

April,  
1862

Almost immediately he increased his reputation in a brilliant skirmish, was given a brigade, offended General Grant during the latter's eclipse, and became the only soldier to survive a quarrel with that quiet but unforgiving character by insisting upon leaving his command to join Buell. He served under Buell and Rosecrans through the Stone River and Murfreesboro campaigns, with constantly increasing reputation. As we have seen, he remained on the field at Chickamauga with the division that he now commanded and was the hero of the attack on Missionary Ridge and the pursuit after it.

July 1,  
1862

Nov.  
24-25,  
1863

Since Meade and Sheridan quarreled at once, and Torbert

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 60-61.

May 8,  
1864

and Merritt (old Army of the Potomac division-commanders) and Wilson practically betrayed one another to the enemy,<sup>13</sup> it may have been as well that no more Western generals were brought to the Army of the Potomac.

The Appalachian mountain-range runs from Labrador southwest to Alabama. It is pierced by the St. Lawrence River, Lake Champlain, and the Mohawk Valley, and further south there are other passes practicable for railroads. At the time of the Civil War, railroads crossed it only at Harrisburg in Pennsylvania, Harper's Ferry in West Virginia, and Chattanooga in Tennessee. South of Harper's Ferry the range consists in general of two ridges, with the Shenandoah River running between them in the northern and the Tennessee River in the southern part. A railroad from Richmond ran through the eastern ridge and down the valley to Chattanooga, forking at Missionary Ridge to Atlanta and through Chattanooga to Nashville.

Therefore at the outbreak of the war, when the opposing lines followed the Potomac and Ohio rivers, connections between the East and West favored the North; but as Grant pushed the Union armies in the West farther and farther southward, the advantage shifted to the South, which could use the Richmond-Chattanooga railway until the occupation of Chattanooga and Knoxville by Northern troops, when the roads from Washington to Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, and Chattanooga were no more roundabout than those from Richmond via Charleston to Atlanta and Dalton.

By the end of 1863 all territory west of the mountains had been occupied and Grant's army had pierced the barrier at Chattanooga and had its pickets on the southeastern slope. The Union forces, of course, had held the eastern slope at Washington from the beginning. The Confederates retained control of the Shenandoah Valley.

It was impracticable for the North to attack through the mountains because no railroads led up to them from the west while a number of lines climbed up the eastern valleys, giv-

<sup>13</sup> See J. H. Wilson, *Under the Old Flag*, I, 486, 542, 543.





ing the South unquestionable ascendancy in this territory.

The Atlantic coast is covered by shoals extending far out to sea and consists of sand-dunes in the form of islands and peninsulas behind which lie extensive swamps. Up to this time the Union forces had only been able to occupy some points on the coast without military or commercial value. The Confederates had blocked advances from these into the interior over the causeways through the swamps and had held all the seaports against attack.

The unoccupied part of the Confederacy therefore lay between an impenetrable wall of mountains and an almost impassable morass, with the two open ends guarded by the fortified cities of Richmond and Atlanta, which would be termed, in French, bastions or *places d'armes*. We may call them fortified bases. They were of immense importance as centers of communication, as factories, depots, hospitals, barracks, and as forts which could be held against superior numbers and into which defeated troops could retreat, thus giving the commanders of their covering armies security in making bold use of them.

These powerful armies lay one before each fortress in strong field intrenchments, with a series of intrenched positions into which they could fall back all the way to the forts.

The case of the Confederates was such that if they could defeat one of the Union armies with one of their own while keeping the other whole, they would win, and that so long as they had one mobile army in the field, they would be unbeaten. The loss of either army would mean ultimate defeat because it would leave the Confederacy defenseless. So would the loss of either fort unless followed by an immediate victory in the field, for neither Confederate army was strong enough to battle its opponent without a fortified base. The besieging of both of their armies in their respective forts would announce the beginning of the end, as the besieged must eventually succumb.

Before the war was over, with glorious heroism and persistency they tried every expedient—attack, passive de-

fense, and their established and perhaps mistaken policy of raiding their enemy's rear. While the Confederates were prevented from concentrating their inferior forces against any fraction of the Union armies by the unfolding of Grant's plan, their resistance was brilliant and logical to the end.

Grant's problem was to destroy either one of the armies, which would involve the fall of the corresponding fort, or to capture one of the forts, which would leave its army without an indispensable support, or to capture the army in the fort as at Donelson and Vicksburg. To accomplish his design he could choose between direct attack as at Donelson, or attack from the rear, which he chose at Vicksburg.

July 18,  
1863  
Dec. 7,  
1863  
Jan. 15,  
1864

He had asked to make the rear attack on Atlanta from Mobile immediately after taking Vicksburg, and had renewed the request after Chattanooga, to be denied both times. He proposed to make it in 1864, but again was circumvented,<sup>14</sup> and so was reduced to advance to Atlanta overland.

Jan. 19,  
1864

After Chattanooga and before his appointment as commander-in-chief, Grant was asked by Halleck to submit a plan of campaign against Virginia. He suggested an advance from Suffolk, Virginia, to Raleigh, North Carolina, which, as at Vicksburg, would strike into a productive and unfortified zone of the Confederacy and compel Lee to come back and fight outside of his well-known and intrenched battle-fields. On becoming commander-in-chief, he abandoned the plan—whether because of Lincoln's opposition to a weakening of the army before the Capitol, his unwillingness to leave Meade in command, as Meade suggests,<sup>15</sup> his distrust of the Army of the Potomac, or still other considerations, we do not know.

Efforts have been made by his detractors to show that his plans of campaign were defeated. To test these charges let

<sup>14</sup> Halleck had involved Banks's army in an expedition up the Red River before Grant received the chief command.

<sup>15</sup> George Meade, *Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade*, II, 176.



us first see what these plans were and then how far they were carried out.

The general plan he elaborated to Sherman in a letter of instructions dated April 4, 1864, the first sentence of which is reminiscent of Napoleon's famous exposition to Massena: "You can see how fine a thing it will be to move into the Palatinate in a square a hundred thousand strong."

GENERAL: It is my design, if the enemy keep quiet and allow me to take the initiative in the spring campaign, to work all parts of the army together, and somewhat toward a common centre. For your information I now write you my programme, as at present determined upon.

I have sent orders to Banks, by private messenger, to finish up his present expedition against Shreveport with all dispatch; to turn over the defense of Red River to General Steele and the navy, and to return your troops to you, and his own to New Orleans; to abandon all of Texas, excepting the Rio Grande, and to hold that with not to exceed four thousand men; to reduce the number of troops on the Mississippi to the lowest number necessary to hold it, and to collect from his command not less than twenty-five thousand men. To this I will add five thousand from Missouri. With this force he is to commence operations against Mobile as soon as he can. It will be impossible for him to commence too early.

April 4,  
1864

Gillmore joins Butler with ten thousand men, and the two operate against Richmond from the south side of James River. This will give Butler thirty-three thousand men to operate with, W. F. Smith commanding the right wing of his forces, and Gillmore the left wing. I will stay with the Army of the Potomac, increased by Burnside's corps of not less than twenty-five thousand effective men, and operate directly against Lee's army, wherever it may be found.

Sigel collects all his available force in two columns, one, under Ord and Averill, to start from Beverly, Virginia, and the other, under Crook, to start from Charleston, on the Kanawha, to move against the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad.

Crook will have all cavalry, and will endeavor to get in about Saltville and move east from there to join Ord. His force will be all cavalry, while Ord will have from ten to twelve thousand men of all arms.

You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources.

I do not propose to lay down for you a plan of campaign, but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done, and leave you free to execute it in your own way. Submit to me, however, as early as you can, your plan of operations.

As stated, Banks is ordered to commence operations as soon as he can. Gillmore is ordered to report at Fortress Monroe by the 18th inst., or as soon thereafter as practicable. Sigel is concentrating now. None will move from their places of rendezvous until I direct, except Banks. I want to be ready to move by the 25th inst., if possible; but all I can now direct is that you get ready as soon as possible. I know you will have difficulties to encounter in getting through the mountains to where supplies are abundant, but I believe you will accomplish it.

From the expedition from the Department of West Virginia I do not calculate on very great results; but it is the only way I can take troops from there. With the long line of railroad Sigel has to protect, he can spare no troops, except to move directly to his front. In this way he must get through to inflict great damage on the enemy, or the enemy must detach from one of his armies a large force to prevent it. In other words, if Sigel can't skin himself, he can hold a leg while some one else skins.

I am, general, very respectfully, Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,

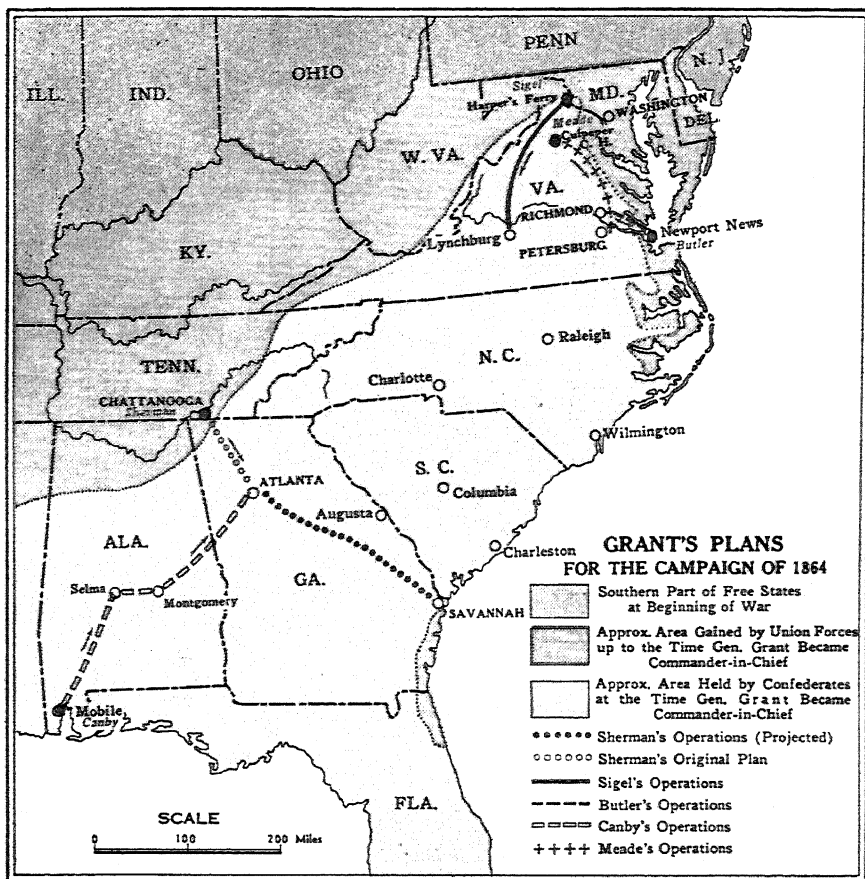
*Lieutenant-General.*<sup>16</sup>

He told Halleck that his principal objective in the East was "to bring Butler's and Meade's forces together on the south bank of the James River," and ordered the formation of a train of siege-artillery to be used there. As we have seen, Grant had first proposed and then abandoned an invasion of the South from Suffolk, directed on Raleigh.

General Franklin, General Butler and General W. F. Smith had proposed to use the sea and reenact the McClellan campaign. This campaign would involve the same dividing of forces as the other but not the advantage of entering a pro-

Jan. 19,  
1864

<sup>16</sup> Sherman's *Memoirs*, pp. 26-27.





ducing and unfortified country, as it would run against the fortifications of Richmond, now impregnable when manned.

There remained several variants of the "overland campaign." One proposed by President Lincoln is recorded in Grant's *Memoirs*:

He brought out a map of Virginia on which he had evidently marked every position occupied by the Federal and Confederate armies up to that time. He pointed out on the map two streams which empty into the Potomac, and suggested that the army might be moved on boats and landed between the mouths of these streams. We would then have the Potomac to bring our supplies, and the tributaries would protect our flanks while we moved out.<sup>17</sup>

About it Grant says: "I listened respectfully, but did not suggest that the same streams would protect Lee's flanks while he was shutting us up."<sup>18</sup>

Another variant was to assault Lee in his trenches.

We have seen that Grant did not fear to assault fortifications when he saw no better alternative, and we will find him doing it again in this campaign, but he never did so from lack of imagination when a better alternative existed. Now he had the alternative of marching past one of Lee's flanks, a dangerous manœuvre which his superiority in numbers would justify.

If he chose Lee's left flank, he would encounter smaller river crossings and more open country, in which a decisive victory could be hoped for more than in the Wilderness. But he could only carry supplies for ten days, and if he failed to smash Lee in that time, he would have to retreat to his base. The effect on the public of a repulse at the hands of Lee at the outset of his campaign would be disastrous. Grant's genius spurned the brilliant chance for the plodding certainty.

It is only fair to those who have criticized Grant for not taking the former course to say that they wrote before the World War, in which the Germans twice avoided attack by

<sup>17</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 51-52.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from Meade, *op. cit.*, II, 176.

the expedient of withdrawing a greater distance than the enemy's supply trains could follow them. And it is only just to Lee's generalship to believe that he might have originated this manœuvre as well as Ludendorff.

By taking the course of Lee's right flank, Grant entered difficult but not impassable territory, but availed himself of a continuous chain of bases to supply his army in what was to prove his irresistible advance and also continued the form of amphibious warfare in which he was experienced and expert. But the battle with Lee outside Richmond was only part of his plan. Simultaneously with his advance, which would hold Lee in full force and perhaps destroy him, he ordered Butler to ascend the James River and storm the defenses of Richmond by surprise. Success in either move would mean early and complete victory.

April 9,  
1864

These manœuvres both failing, as we have seen, he planned to join Butler in the siege of Richmond, in support of which contingency he ordered Sigel to advance from Harper's Ferry, join Crook and Averell coming from West Virginia, and destroy the Tennessee and Virginia and the Virginia Central railroads, useful to Lee in drawing supplies and in raiding the rear of the Army of the Potomac.

Sherman was to advance his three armies at the same time and try similar tactics against Johnston's army and Atlanta. All the Union armies were superior in numbers to the enemy's opposing them and therefore should be safe, if not victorious, provided the enemy were prevented from concentrating against any of them, which Grant planned to do. He set on foot a concerted attack of all his forces in all the theaters of war, a plan beyond the power of any general before or since and beyond the comprehension of his critics, military and otherwise.

Sherman conducted three armies against the Atlanta sector, those of the Tennessee, of the Cumberland, and of the Ohio, and Grant conducted three armies against the Richmond sector, those of the Shenandoah, of the Potomac, and of the James.

General Mangin, a disciple of the school of attack-at-all-cost, claimed that "defense must win everywhere; attack only has to win at one point." This is an argumentative exaggeration. But it is safe to say that Grant opened for himself several avenues, over any one of which he might march to victory. The defeat of Lee, the defeat of Johnston, the storming of Richmond, and the eventual sieges of Richmond and Atlanta—what other general in history has ever opened for himself such prolific alternatives?

In adopting the course he chose, Grant took on two adversaries: Jefferson Davis in the grand strategy of the war and Robert E. Lee in the Virginia campaign.

Davis was a graduate of West Point, a veteran of the Mexican War, in which he won great distinction at the Battle of Buena Vista, and a former Secretary of War. He was equipped for his post as much as it was possible to be by education and experience. He had invariably beaten Halleck in combined manœuvres of eastern and western forces and had been upset only by Grant's defeat of every general and every army he had met. 1828

Lee was an honor-graduate of West Point, an important staff-officer in the Mexican War, and, until his resignation from the United States army, General Scott's choice for general of the armies of the United States. In the Civil War his success had been a marvel to friend, foe, and neutral. By 1864 he had become an expert in the type of warfare he had conducted over this single terrain and was idolized by his officers and soldiers. 1829

Grant had an advantage over Davis in that he could execute a part of his orders; an advantage over Lee in that he could direct operations outside of his own army. He had not Lee's experience in fighting in Virginia, and he was an unwelcome stranger in the Army of the Potomac, but he had a much broader experience and could bring to bear some methods he had taught himself in the West for which Lee was unprepared.

The promotion of Grant of the Army of the Tennessee to

March 9,  
1864

command over the Army of the Potomac was obviously a reflection on that army and its generals. His leaving the Western armies to the command of Sherman and coming in person to take charge of theirs was resented, as had been his coming to take command of the armies under McClelland and Thomas. Though they could not deny their own inferiority to Lee, they were unwilling to admit that Grant was their superior.

Rawlins wrote to his wife from Culpeper:

May 2,  
1864

There is a habit contracted among officers of this army anything but praiseworthy, namely, of saying of western successes; "Well, you never met Bobby Lee and his boys; it would be quite different if you had." And in speaking of the probabilities of our success in the coming campaign; "Well, that may be, but, mind you, Bobby Lee is just over the Rapidan."<sup>19</sup>

When Grant became commander-in-chief, he found Banks' army committed west of the Mississippi. The movements of the forces on the west side of the river were not yet under Grant's command, nor were the four departments in the vicinity of Washington or the troops in them.

May,  
1864

As he embarked on his grand campaign, with headquarters in the field, there remained in Washington the trinity that had been running the war for two years: Lincoln, great politician and statesman; Stanton, unsurpassed executive among politicians; and Halleck, whose works as a military hack-writer concealed from his contemporaries his total lack of military instinct and whose capacity as a falsifier of events and public documents had brought him credit for the achievements of others and saved him so far from blame for his own faulty conduct.

Grant exercised complete control over the armies under his hand and over Sherman, who would obey no one else. Elsewhere, with their customary failures in the field, Lincoln, Stanton, and Halleck continued to work together or at cross-purposes, especially west of the Mississippi River

<sup>19</sup> J. H. Wilson, *Life of John A. Rawlins*, pp. 426-27.



and in the vicinity of Washington. They also furnished an available trident upon which the generals of the Army of the Potomac might impale Grant if he made it necessary for them to do so from motives of self-preservation.

Grant was stronger in face of Lincoln by virtue of the act creating "a commander-in-chief under the President" than either McClellan or Halleck had been, but Lincoln could be expected to resent the imposition of a general upon him by act of Congress. The act was unconstitutional, and if Lincoln at any time had seen fit to remove Grant, he would have had to submit. As his removal would have been facilitated if he came into collision with Meade or a preponderance of the generals of the army, Grant had to show more than ordinary consideration to them.

Grant and Lincoln drew together as the campaign progressed, and the congressional origin of Grant's appointment was of inestimable value to both of them when discontent was aroused by Grant's failure to win a speedy victory in 1864 in spite of losses heavy for the Civil War but not so heavy compared to the losses of the Japanese at Port Arthur and the losses of all armies attacking in the World War.

## CHAPTER IX

### FROM THE RAPIDAN TO THE JAMES

July 15,  
1863

**R**ETURNING from the Gettysburg raid, which he had been compelled to undertake as a desperate diversion against Grant's success at Vicksburg, Lee had imposed upon Meade the most powerful defensive position in Virginia—the Wilderness behind the Rapidan River. With one hundred miles of defensive territory at his back, with the rich valley of Virginia on his flank to produce supplies and threaten the Union right flank and rear, he had held Meade in this position while Longstreet moved to Tennessee to participate in the defeat of Rosecrans and to fall before the victory of Grant. When Grant came East, Lee recalled Longstreet and stood at bay in the Wilderness like a tiger in a jungle.

May 2,  
1864

Grant's first concern, faced as at Vicksburg by strong defenses and a mighty army, was to get his own army across the river and in order of battle before he was opposed or attacked. Secretive as on the previous occasion, he withheld until May 2nd his orders to the corps-commanders to march the following midnight.

Hancock's Second Corps, led by Gregg's Second Cavalry Division, was ordered to cross Ely's Ford and move to the ill-omened town of Chancellorsville; the rest of the infantry to cross at Germanna Ford; Warren's Fifth Corps to march to Wilderness Tavern, and Sedgwick's Sixth Corps to follow close behind; Burnside's Ninth Corps to await orders at Brandy; reserve artillery to cross at Ely's Ford and then follow the Second Corps; the trains to cross at Ely's Ford and Culpeper Mine Ford and follow roads further east.

This formation "in echelon" put the Second Corps in front and to the left, where it could outflank any resistance to the advance of the main column and where its flank was

protected by the advance of the latter. The Germanna road, being the better of the two, was to carry the bulk of the combined armies.

The movement of the first day was carried out according to plan. That night the Second Corps was at Chancellorsville, the Fifth Corps at Wilderness Tavern, the Sixth Corps behind it, and the Ninth Corps ordered up from Brandy. Wilson's Third Cavalry Division was at Parker's Store.

May 4,  
1864

Grant now held both the roads by which Lee could attack him—the Orange Turnpike in force with the Fifth Corps and the Orange Plank with a cavalry division behind which was the Second Corps, some eight miles distant. (Hereafter for simplicity and clarity these roads will be referred to as the Pike and the Plank.)

Grant camped on the south bank of the river. Again approaching the enemy, he felt as he had felt at Bruinsberg. Of his situation he says:

May 9,  
1864

“This I regarded as a great success, and it removed from my mind the most serious apprehensions I had entertained, that of crossing the river in the face of an active, large, well-appointed, and ably-commanded army, and how so large a train was to be carried through a hostile country and protected.” And he might well be gratified at the result, for it was a good day's work in such a country for so large an army with its artillery and fighting trains to march twenty miles, and cross a river on five bridges of its own building, without a single mishap, interruption, or delay.<sup>1</sup>

But the situations were far from parallel. If at Bruinsberg the river behind him was larger, the army under his command, composed of confident soldiers well known to their commander, was small enough for him to direct every detail of supply and every movement. Now he was commanding a large army of strangers through the intermediation of a strange general, both accustomed to expect sudden disaster.

Morris Schaff, a graduate of West Point serving with the forces, thus describes the army:

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Andrew A. Humphreys, *The Army in the Civil War*, XII, 19–20.

. . . the Army of the Potomac's one weakness, the lack of springy formation, and audacious, self-reliant initiative. This organic weakness was entirely due to not having had in its youth skillfully aggressive leadership. Its early commanders had dissipated war's best elixir by training it into a life of caution, and the evil of that schooling it had shown on more than one occasion, and unmistakably that day, and it had had to suffer for it.<sup>2</sup>

Grant had seen a shocking lack of discipline on the march from Culpeper, but he did not know that most of the commands had started and ended their marches late or that the Fifth Corps, closest to the enemy, was neglecting the order to keep detachments well out on its right flank. In consequence, as at Shiloh, the proximity of the enemy was unknown to him, and he ordered the march to continue at five o'clock the following morning—the Second Corps to go to Shady Grove Church and extend its right to Parker's Store, the Fifth Corps to Parker's Store, the Third Cavalry Division from Parker's Store to Craig's Meeting House.

May 5,  
1864

Wilson moved out on time, but Warren's corps was late again, and, shortly after discovering enemy troops on the Pike across which it was marching, it had to halt to face the enemy and in consequence did not reach Parker's Store. The defense of the Plank was left to a single regiment of cavalry which was forced out of Parker's Store, and Wilson's division was cut off.

Grant, waiting at the ford for Burnside, knew nothing of this; and when he heard from Meade, who had gone forward and sent back word reported by Gibbon to Warren that the Confederates were in force on the Pike, he replied: "If any opportunity presents itself for pitching into a part of Lee's army do so without giving time for disposition."<sup>3</sup>

This is the first time Grant used the phrase he was to repeat so often. We have seen how little attention he had paid to *Hardee's Tactics*. His western woodsmen had moved easily in any direction ordered,<sup>4</sup> much as the Germans learned

<sup>2</sup> Morris Schaff, *The Battle of the Wilderness*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, II, 104.

<sup>4</sup> See Horace Porter, *Campaigning with Grant*, p. 513.

to do at the end of the World War. But in the East, drill-ground formations had been insisted upon to the detriment of efficiency and success.

It may have occurred to him then that again he was away from the battle, waiting for Burnside, as before Shiloh he had been away waiting for Buell and at Donelson talking with Foote, for without waiting for Burnside he left word for him to follow and joined Meade near Wilderness Tavern.

In the fighting that followed, the soundness of Grant's directions and the glory of field-offices made up for the deficiencies in the generals. Colonel Hammond, fighting in retreat along the Plank road, delayed Hill's corps until Grant could move General Getty's division of the Sixth Corps past the rear of Warren's corps to the Brock road-Plank road crossing, the key-point of the battle-field. He sent Wright's division of Sedgwick's corps by a wood-road to connect on Warren's right. The remainder of the corps was close behind. He ordered Hancock from the left-rear to join Getty.

May 5,  
1864

As the battle joined, Grant had in hand more men than Lee's whole joined army, a third of which was a day's march distant. Burnside, not far away, was a strategic reserve available for any purpose. The stage was set for victory, but the generals of Seven Pines, Manassas, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg could not overcome their apprehensions.

Warren lost hours before attacking Ewell on the Pike, then drove him handsomely but could not develop his success. Hancock "the superb" came to the Brock road at ten in the morning, spent two hours forming his troops, and accomplished nothing. The whole Army of the Potomac in excellent formation was more than held at bay by two isolated corps.

May 5,  
1864

When night fell, Grant knew that Ewell's corps was across the Pike and Hill's athwart the Plank road, with a wide gap between them, and that Longstreet was still some distance away. Burnside was now close up. Grant therefore ordered Hancock to attack Hill at four-thirty the next morn-

ing, and Burnside to pierce Lee's unprotected center and roll up Hill's left flank. A meeting of the corps-commanders with Meade and Burnside asked that the attack be postponed until six; this would allow Longstreet an hour and a half more to reach the scene, and was refused. To show his new subordinates some consideration, Grant unwillingly put off the attack until five.

May 6,  
1864

At four-thirty Ewell attacked, but Grant recognized that this was a device of Lee to gain time for his right flank, and ordered Hancock forward. The attack was made in overwhelming numbers and was eminently successful. Pressed home, it might have won a complete victory. But Hancock could not shake off the apprehensions of another Chancellorsville. He shrank when he should have driven, was confused by contradictory orders from Humphreys, mistook a column of soldiers returning from leave to be an attack on his left flank, thought the cavalry battle on his left was an outflanking movement, and let the golden moment pass. Longstreet's corps arrived and rallied Hill's. There was confused fighting all day, until in the afternoon Longstreet found the end of Hancock's line, attacked it, and rolled it up.

At night Hancock, who had under his command almost half the Army of the Potomac, was back in his intrenchments, repulsed—almost defeated.

Burnside had arrived at his post in the center two hours late and did not progress at all. He found time during the vital moments to eat a hearty lunch from a champagne-basket, but even Comstock, the most remorseless of Grant's aides, was unable to get any action out of him or his corps.

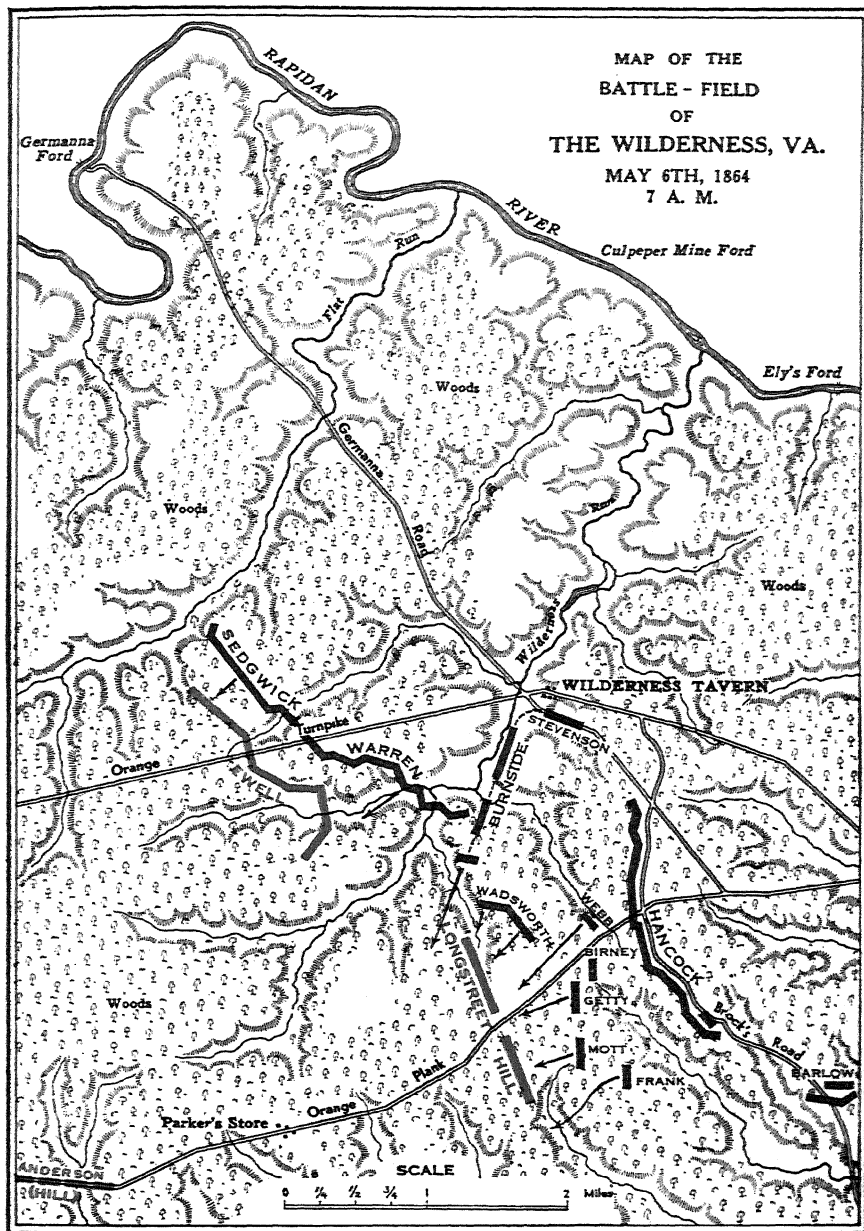
Sedgwick's rôle through the day had been to keep Ewell from forwarding troops to the right flank. In this he had succeeded, but he was as careless of his right flank as Hancock had been of his left, for the Confederate general, Gordon turned it and toward evening drove it in with great confusion.

May 5,  
1864

After joining Meade on the morning of the first day's fight, Grant had remained almost constantly at his head-

MAP OF THE  
BATTLE - FIELD  
OF  
THE WILDERNESS, VA.

MAY 6TH, 1864  
7 A. M.







quarters near the battle-line where he was in the best possible contact with his whole army, a point from which report of his calm, confident demeanor could be carried to his overwrought subordinates, as when Birney's aide came to Grant and reported that the enemy had broken the lines. He and Meade were sitting together at the foot of a tree, and Grant, after hearing the story, did not stir but, looking up, said in his usual low, softly vibrating voice: "I don't believe it."<sup>5</sup>

Then during one of Warren's repulses the firing-line fell back almost to headquarters, and the suggestion was made that it be withdrawn. Grant replied: "It strikes me it would be better to order up some artillery and defend the present location."<sup>6</sup>

If Sir David Henderson could have appreciated Grant and taught this principle to the British army, Marshal Foch would not have been called upon to forbid the retreat of the headquarters of generals in the retreat of 1918.

Another story of Grant's calm demeanor in the face of panic is told as follows:

Some time after his repulse, Griffin, in miserable humor, rode back to Meade's headquarters, and in the course of his interview allowed his feelings to get away with him, exclaiming in the hearing of every one around that he had driven Ewell three-quarters of a mile, but had had no support on his flanks. Then, boiling still higher, he censured Wright of the Sixth Corps for not coming to his aid, and even blurted out something so mutinous about Warren, that Grant asked Meade, "Who is this General Gregg? You ought to arrest him." Meade, however, kept his temper and said soothingly, "It's Griffin, not Gregg, and it's only his way of talking."<sup>7</sup>

It was at the end of the second day's fighting, when Sedgwick was outflanked, that Grant once more tore victory from the teeth of panic. Frightened men and officers fled through

May 6.  
1864

<sup>5</sup> Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

<sup>6</sup> Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup> Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

the army crying that the day was lost. A general rushed up to Grant and said:

“General Grant, this is a crisis that cannot be looked upon too seriously. I know Lee’s methods well by past experience; he will throw his whole army between us and the Rapidan, and cut us off completely from our communications.” The general rose to his feet, took his cigar out of his mouth, turned to the officer, and replied, with a degree of animation which he seldom manifested: “Oh, I am heartily tired of hearing about what Lee is going to do. Some of you always seem to think he is suddenly going to turn a double somersault, and land in our rear and on both of our flanks at the same time. Go back to your command, and try to think what we are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do.”<sup>8</sup>

As to the effect on Grant of the two days’ strain, Wilson and Porter, who knew more than any others, differ. According to Porter,

The general, after having given his final orders providing for any emergency which might arise, entered his tent, and threw himself down upon his camp-bed. Ten minutes thereafter an alarming report was received from the right. I looked in his tent, and found him sleeping as soundly and as peacefully as an infant. I waked him, and communicated the report. His military instincts convinced him that it was a gross exaggeration, and as he had already made every provision for meeting any renewed attempts against the right, he turned over in his bed, and immediately went to sleep again.<sup>9</sup>

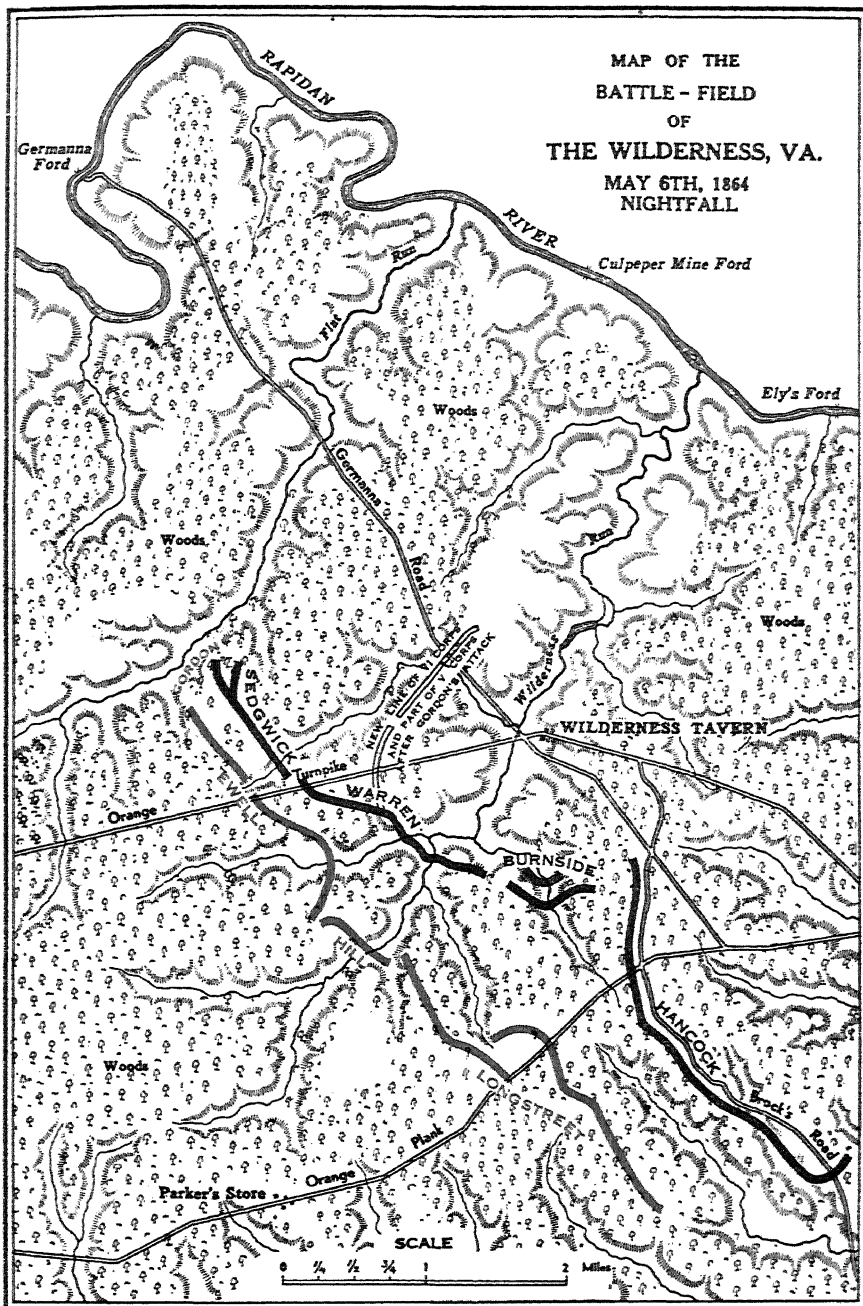
But Wilson contradicts:

Rawlins and Bowers united in saying to me aside before I left that the situation the night before for a time seemed appalling, that Grant met it outwardly with calmness and self-possession, but after he had asked such questions and given such orders as the emergency seemed to call for, he withdrew to his tent and, throwing himself face downward on his cot, instead of going to sleep, gave vent to his feelings in a way which left no room to doubt that he was deeply moved. They concurred in assuring me that, while he revealed to others neither uncertainty nor hesitation as to what was to be done,

<sup>8</sup> Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

MAP OF THE  
BATTLE - FIELD  
OF  
THE WILDERNESS, VA.  
MAY 6TH, 1864  
NIGHTFALL





and was equally free from the appearance of indifference and bravado, he made no effort to conceal from them the gravity of the danger by which the army was threatened. They had been with him in every battle from the beginning of his career, and had never before seen him show the slightest apprehension or sense of danger; but on that memorable night in the Wilderness it was much more than personal danger which confronted him. No one knew better than he that he was face to face with destiny, and there was no doubt in their minds that he realized it fully and understood perfectly that retreat from that field meant a great calamity to his country as well as to himself. That he did not show the stolidity that has been attributed to him in that emergency but fully realized its importance is greatly to his credit. It rests upon the concurrent testimony of those two faithful officers that he not only perfectly understood the situation but was the first to declare that the enemy, not having fully improved his advantage, had lost a great opportunity. It was also Grant who was first to see with the clear vision of a great leader that the true way out of the perils which surrounded him was to leave the care of his right flank to the imperturbable Sedgwick, and push his army, as soon as it could see its way, through the Wilderness on its forward march "towards Richmond." <sup>10</sup>

And he adds:

Knowing how important it was that both Grant and Meade should be immediately advised as to the exact state of affairs in this quarter, I sent a staff officer to report to the latter, and rode myself rapidly to the former. Naturally I was full of anxiety as to the effect upon Grant of the exciting incidents of the two days previous and especially of the night before, and hence went as fast as my horse could carry me. I reached headquarters on a little wooded knoll in the Wilderness at, or shortly after, seven o'clock, and dismounting at the proper distance, I had started up the hillside when Grant caught sight of me, and before receiving my report, called out cheerily: "It's all right, Wilson; the army is moving towards Richmond!" <sup>11</sup>

Sherman, who felt keenly the strain of battle, says of this moment:

<sup>10</sup> J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, pp. 216-17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Though Meade commanded the Army of the Potomac, Grant virtually controlled it, and on the 4th of May, 1864, he crossed the Rapidan, and at noon of the 5th attacked Lee. He knew that a certain amount of fighting, "killing," had to be done to accomplish this end, and also to pay the penalty of former failures. In the "wilderness" there was no room for grand strategy, or even minor tactics; but the fighting was desperate, the losses of the Union army being, according to Phisterer, 18,387, (later official compilation, 17,666) to the Confederate loss of 11,400—the difference due to Lee's intrenchments and the blind nature of the country in which the battle was fought. On the night of May 7th both parties paused, appalled by the fearful slaughter; but Grant commanded, "Forward by the left flank." That was, in my judgment, the supreme moment of his life; undismayed, with a full comprehension of the importance of the work in which he was engaged, feeling as keen a sympathy for his dead and wounded as anyone, and without stopping to count his numbers, he gave his orders calmly, specifically, and absolutely— "Forward to Spottsylvania."<sup>12</sup>

Sublime as he was, taken by any ordinary measure, even that of commanders-in-chief, Grant was acting entirely in line with his whole career; so had he done at Belmont, Donelson, and Shiloh; so had he done at Chattanooga; looking back to Mexico, we find him the commander of the crises at Monterey and San Cosme. For Grant was a hero, without fear and without reproach, who needed neither the panoply of war nor the customary mannerisms of command to buoy up his iron will.

On the night of May 6th Hancock, Burnside, Warren, and Sedgwick, from left to right, were beaten men. Meade and his staff were so worn they could not issue orders till the next afternoon.

Again quoting Schaff:

The record seems to show that Meade, Hancock, as well as Gibbon and presumably Humphreys in a measure, all harbored a fear that Longstreet, on the left, would suddenly appear a portentous spectre, forever casting its image on their minds. There is no evidence, how-

<sup>12</sup> W. T. Sherman, "The Grand Strategy of the Last Year of the War," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, IV, 248.

ever, that any such notion had stolen into Grant's mind, for, neither at that time, nor ever after, was there magic in the name of Longstreet, Lee, or any other Confederate, for him. (Warren always, when Lee's movements were uncertain and a matter of discussion, referred to him as "Bobbie" Lee, with an air and tone that said he is not a man to be fooled with.) And so, let Longstreet be on the road to strike him at whatsoever point, Grant wanted Hill and Ewell to be beaten before help could reach them; hence his sound conclusion of the night before, to attack at daylight.<sup>13</sup>

When Wilson anxiously went to headquarters, Grant cried out cheerily, "It's all right, Wilson, the army is moving towards Richmond." Grant alone was unafraid.

For General Foch a writer created a sentence: "My right is driven in, my centre is giving way, the situation is excellent, I attack."<sup>14</sup> Grant, too fine a soldier to suggest to a subordinate that his center was repulsed and both his flanks driven in, created a greater epigram when he said: "It's all right, Wilson, the army is moving towards Richmond." He had given that order at daybreak.

A hostile commentator has observed that the smaller army turned both flanks of a larger army, but he has failed to add that this "double envelopment," this "Cannae," so eloquently taught by General von Schleicher, not only failed of victory, but failed of any success whatever. It failed because it encountered the iron soul of Grant.

Grant mounted and, as a matter of convenience, all unconscious of the drama about to ensue, led the advancing troops. Until they reached the Brock road and turned into it, the men were uncertain. This might be another of their customary retreats. When they found that they were still advancing on Richmond, they burst into wild cheers.

May 7,  
1864

The cheering only suggested to Grant that Lee might learn of his movement, but to the generals under his command it meant that the army had confirmed the appointment of this general who had led them forward after a repulse. It

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 247-48.

<sup>14</sup> Liddell Hart, *Foch, the Man of Orleans*, p. 108.

meant a rebuke to the timidity of the corps- and division-commanders in the Wilderness. There were flushed faces under the gold bands on the generals' hats as their owners realized that, compared with the new chief, their own men had found them wanting.

This led to the total change in their attitude in the next engagement, their offers to attack strong intrenchments even without reconnaissance. The soldiers had demonstrated that they appreciated the fact that Grant was something new and superior to what they had known before, and the generals of the Army of the Potomac thereafter desperately tried to live up to that standard. Among the results of the Battle of the Wilderness was that Grant won the admiration of the rank and file of the army.

To Grant, also, certain early experiences in the West had been reënacted. His attacks had met success, the enemy's attacks, also, dangerous success. He would give the enemy no further chance to make those dashing charges which had wrecked the Army of the Potomac so often and would have wrecked it in the Wilderness but for Grant's iron nerve.

We have seen the difficulties of the Union side. The days had also gone hard with Lee.

The great Confederate realized that a tactical success in the West might drive Sherman back into Chattanooga, but nothing less than the destruction or capture of his army could hope to bring an end to the war. On the other hand, a defeat of Grant, forcing him to retreat, might impress the North with the infallibility of Lee and cause a relinquishment of the struggle.

Accordingly, while Johnston stood in his trenches, Lee struck at Grant's columns with all the fury of which he was master. But the familiar victory did not ensue.

Lee had ordered Hill and Ewell forward, but not to bring on a general engagement until Longstreet came up; judging by his previous experience, the Federals would be *fixed* by the proximity of his troops and leave him time for one of his knockout punches. Grant's abrupt action in attacking sur-



prised him and would have destroyed him except that, as he had misread Grant, he had correctly read Grant's generals. Strive as he might, Grant could not drive them forward.

On the evening of the first day Ewell had come within two miles of Wilderness Tavern. He had been told not to get ahead of Hill on the Plank road, but had done so; he had been told not to bring on a general engagement before Longstreet got up, and had done so. He was isolated in front of Warren all the morning of the fifth and was hardly used in spite of Warren's slowness.

May 5,  
1864

Hill had been saved during the first day by Hancock's delays, but had been badly defeated on the morning of the second day. Longstreet had repulsed Hancock in the afternoon of that day, and Gordon and Early had beaten Sedgwick, but all their forces were so exhausted and disorganized that Lee withdrew them into his trenches.

May 6,  
1864

The advantages of the terrain had been equal in the battle, but Lee had the advantage of familiarity with the battlefield and of prepared works in his rear into which he could and did retreat when the battle went against him. Grant, of course, had no such defensive works to support him. However, Lee judged Grant by his predecessors and telegraphed Jefferson Davis:

The enemy has abandoned his position, and is moving towards Fredericksburg. This army is in motion on his right flank, and our advance is now at Spottsylvania court-house.<sup>15</sup>

News that Grant was really advancing was the first and greatest shock Lee received in that year of sorrow. It told him that he had not beaten Grant. With his depleted army he could attack no more, could only resist and raid and hope that exhaustion of the North or victory in another field would bring the victory he had tried so hard to win.

There were three separate cavalry engagements during the battle. After Wilson was cut off from Warren's corps, he was attacked by General Rosser's cavalry division sup-

May 5,  
1864

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, II, 140.

ported by infantry and was forced back to Todd's Tavern, where, reinforced by Sheridan with Gregg's division, he turned on his assailants and drove them back several miles.

May 6,  
1864

On the second day Sheridan sought and found the enemy cavalry again in the vicinity of Todd's Tavern, and again repulsed them, but that evening Meade, in his spirit of defeatism, withdrew the cavalry to the rear to cover the trains. In consequence, they had to take Todd's Tavern again the third day, and there, owing to the depression of Meade's staff, they remained without orders until the infantry came up and became entangled with them.

May 7,  
1864

Lee, hearing Grant's trains moving on the night of May 7th, believed that Grant, like his predecessors, had had enough and was retreating on Fredericksburg. He so notified Jefferson Davis and ordered Anderson, now commanding Longstreet's corps, to move to Spottsylvania *the next morning*. The woods, however, were on fire—so Anderson marched for Spottsylvania that night.

Sheridan and Badeau both claim that Meade's mistaken orders to the cavalry, written at Todd's Tavern on the night of the seventh, left the road open to Anderson. Humphreys denies this at length and says that the presence of Confederate cavalry on the Brock road (there because Meade had pulled his own cavalry to the rear) caused the delay that permitted Anderson to reach Spottsylvania first.

Grant, in his *Memoirs*, takes the former view:

Sheridan's cavalry had had considerable fighting during the afternoon of the 7th, lasting at Todd's Tavern until after night, with the field his at the close. He issued the necessary orders for seizing Spottsylvania and holding the bridge over the Po River, which Lee's troops would have to cross to get to Spottsylvania. But Meade changed Sheridan's orders to Merritt—who was holding the bridge—on his arrival at Todd's Tavern, and thereby left the road free for Anderson when he came up. Wilson, who was ordered to seize the town, did so with his division of cavalry; but he could not hold it against the Confederate corps, which had not been detained at the crossing of the Po, as it would have been but for the unfor-

fortunate change in Merritt's orders. Had he been permitted to execute the orders Sheridan gave him, he would have been guarding with two brigades of cavalry the bridge over the Po River which Anderson had to cross, and must have detained him long enough to enable Warren to reinforce Wilson and hold the town.<sup>16</sup>

As to what would have happened except for this blunder, he says:

My belief is that there would have been a race between the two armies to see which could reach Richmond first, and the Army of the Potomac would have had the shorter line. Thus twice since crossing the Rapidan we came near closing the campaign, so far as battles were concerned, from the Rapidan to the James River or Richmond. The first failure was caused by our [Hancock's] not following up the success gained over Hill's corps on the morning of the 6th, as before described; the second, when fires caused by that battle drove Anderson to make a march during the night of the 7th-8th which he was ordered to commence on the morning of the 8th. But accident often decides the fate of battle.<sup>17</sup>

This was the greatest of Grant's disappointments in the overland campaign, the only one he refers to more than once.

In consequence of this misunderstanding, Meade and Sheridan quarreled on the morning of May 8th over the movements of the cavalry on the previous night. Meade's language was insupportable; Sheridan's was insubordinate. As Sheridan was Grant's appointee, the army-commander could not himself punish him and immediately appealed to Grant. In describing the scene, he mentioned that Sheridan had said that if given permission to cut loose from the army, he could raid Lee's rear and defeat Lee's cavalry. That was Grant's cue. He replied: "Did Sheridan say that? Well, he generally knows what he is talking about. Let him start right out and do it."<sup>18</sup>

May 8,  
1864

Sheridan started the next morning.

<sup>16</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, pp. 122-23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Although the quarrel between Meade and Sheridan furnished the occasion for Grant to send the latter on his raid, he had solid reasons for doing so. In the Wilderness, Meade had been constantly pulling the cavalry back to guard the wagon-trains, where it became entangled with the infantry and left the Confederate cavalry free to scout around the flanks and obstruct the advance of the army. Sent on a raid, it would clear the road of its own long columns of troops, combat-trains and forage-wagons. Drawing Lee's cavalry after it would clear the flanks. It would disrupt Lee's service of the rear, connect with Butler, and be ready to complete the destruction of Lee's army if Grant could defeat it. But most important of all, it would take the initiative and ascendancy which the Southern cavalry had held in the East since the beginning of the war, as Colonel Grierson had taken it in the Vicksburg campaign.

June,  
1863

May 9,  
1864

The raid was carried out as planned. The cavalry left the infantry on the ninth, marched around the left flank of Lee's army, broke the Virginia Central Railroad in his rear, and destroyed valuable supplies. At Yellow Tavern it defeated the Confederate cavalry under General Stuart, who was mortally wounded in the action.

It then broke through the outer defenses of Richmond, causing a panic in the city and the cessation of civil, military, and governmental activities, and, avoiding the combined force of infantry and cavalry sent to attack it, joined Butler at Bermuda Hundred. It rested there four days, when it set out and, marching around Lee's right flank, joined Grant at the North Anna, having ridden completely around Lee's army.

May 24,  
1864

Sheridan had done all that Grant had asked of him and was the more appreciated because up to this time he was the only one of Grant's subordinates to execute his mission. To Joseph Medill, Grant said: "Little Phil is a dandy!"

After his return, while Sheridan remained with the Army of the Potomac, Grant originated all his orders and Meade only transmitted them. Grant even contemplated forming

the cavalry into a separate army to avoid the impasse that had interposed between Meade and Sheridan. In supporting Sheridan against Meade, Grant gave the latter further offense, which was undoubtedly shared by the other Army of the Potomac generals, and drew on the amount of self-assertion that they would endure.

Generals, more than any other class of citizens, are jealous of their prerogatives, and when they have a common interest and a common pride, such as motivated the commanders of the Army of the Potomac, they are not to be defied even by a commander-in-chief. Grant realized this and bore with delinquencies that he would not have tolerated otherwise.

While Anderson's occupation of Spottsylvania was providential for Lee in keeping Grant from his rear, it left Anderson isolated from the rest of the Confederate army and close to three Union army-corps, all larger than his.

In order to seize advantage of the opportunity presented to him, Grant immediately ordered Sedgwick and Burnside to the scene and commanded Warren to attack. Warren attacked, clumsily, in Grant's opinion, and was repulsed. The other two corps dallied on the way and did not reach the battle-field in time to engage that day. By the next morning Lee's whole army was up and it was too late to destroy Anderson.

May 8,  
1864

After some movements occasioned by Grant's surmise that Lee was trying to get into Fredericksburg, and a misunderstanding of orders by Burnside's command owing to a faulty map, Lee's three corps were found formed in a segment of a circle facing Sedgwick, Warren, and Burnside. Hancock was therefore brought up on Lee's open left flank on the ninth, but he, too, came too late to take advantage of the opportunity. By the next morning Early had been moved across the chord of the segment and faced him in strong position.

May 9,  
1864

Lee now settled down in front of Grant in a position partly selected by himself, partly imposed upon him, roughly, in the shape of two sides of an equilateral triangle, with the

River Po at his rear. The strength of his position has been lauded in that it gave him "interior lines" so that he could strengthen any point by marching across the salient while Grant's men must march around, that the river covered his rear, and, mark this, "*it enabled him to dispense with a reserve.*"<sup>19</sup>

A critic could urge that Lee had put himself in the very position in which Hannibal had trapped the Romans at Cannae, that a defeat would drive his troops into a suicidal mob with a river at their back, that only the impossibility of moving sufficient ammunition prevented such an avalanche of artillery fire on the concentrated troops as was to destroy the German salients in 1918.<sup>20</sup>

In this position Grant now tried to smash Lee by direct assault as Marlborough had tried to smash Villars at Malplaquet and as Napoleon had tried to smash Wellington at Waterloo.

For a mile from their juncture the two sides of Lee's line ran back nearly parallel to each other, not more than half a mile apart. It was upon these lines that Grant projected his principal attacks.

Although all his corps-commanders recommended as-

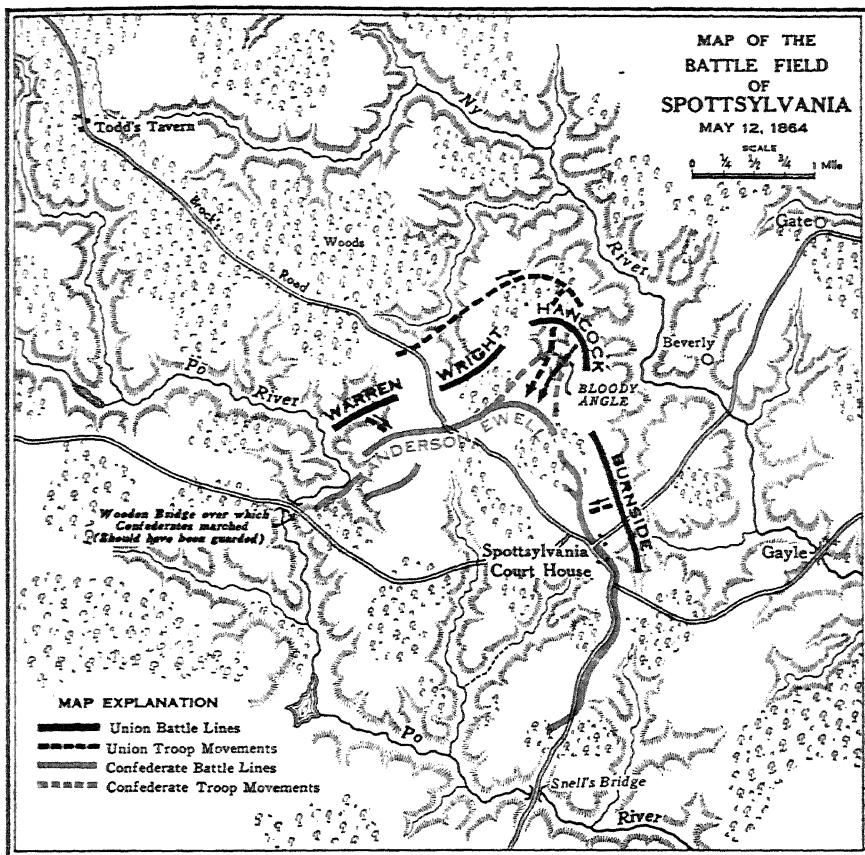
<sup>19</sup> It is significant of the bias of the military literature of this war that praise can be found for Lee for doing without a reserve, but when Grant is charged with doing without it, as in the little Battle of Belmont, he is blamed.

<sup>20</sup> "From the days of short fronts and short-range weapons, salients have been well recognized weak points for the reason that the adversary could concentrate a heavy fire upon them from several directions and confuse the defenders by simultaneous attacks on the different fronts. In the early part of this war, although ranges had increased enormously, the lengths of fronts had increased in even greater proportion, and many salients were created and held with impunity because they were so much greater in extent than the range of the artillery used in the early period of the war that it was impossible to concentrate fire upon them. It seemed as though the old principle of tactics no longer held.

However, by the spring of 1918 the French had armed themselves with a great number of mobile guns ranging nearly 20,000 meters. With these they surrounded the Cantigny and Château-Thierry salients. The divisional artillery fired to its extreme range. From there on the 155 longs took up the mission. A small semi-circle which the longs could not reach was attacked with special cannon of still greater range and with aerial bombardments. Nowhere in the salients was there safety or rest for the Germans. Advancing to the front line or returning to rest, they were compelled to pass mile after mile over roads subject to artillery fire."—Colonel Robert R. McCormick, *The Army of 1918*, pp. 106-7.

MAP OF THE  
BATTLE FIELD  
OF  
SPOTTSYLVANIA  
MAY 12, 1864

SCALE  
0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 Mile







saults on their fronts at one time or another, he assigned Hancock to command the attacking troops. He had distrusted Burnside from the beginning; now he had lost faith in Warren, and Wright was a novice corps-commander, having succeeded to command of the Sixth Corps upon the death of General Sedgwick the previous day. But General Hancock had been drawn in by a diversion attack by Hill on his own corps as it was withdrawing to enter into the assault, and in consequence the first assault on the afternoon of May 7th was directed by General Wright.

May 11,  
1864

A storming column was made by twelve picked regiments under Colonel Emory Upton and was successful in crossing the intrenchments. The seconding attack, which a division of the Second Corps under General Mott was ordered to deliver, did not materialize, so Upton was compelled to retire after dark.

A reconnaissance the following day revealed the Confederate troops in the same position, and Grant determined to remount the attack on a greater scale, Hancock commanding in person.

The troops were moved into position at night—perhaps another memory of Contreras—and the assault was delivered at daylight on May 12th by Barlow's and Birney's divisions. Warren, occupying the ground facing the opposite side, was ordered not to attack there; and Burnside, to whom colonels Comstock and Babcock of Grant's staff had been sent as "deputies on mission,"<sup>21</sup> was ordered to attack on the left.

May 12,  
1864

Here the Army of the Potomac fought for the man who had led it forward from the Wilderness as it never had fought for any other general.

Horace Porter describes the battles as reported to headquarters not far from the point of attack:

When I arrived the general was up and sitting wrapped in his overcoat close to a camp-fire which was struggling heroically to

<sup>21</sup> Deputies on mission were members of the French revolutionary assembly sent to the armies to force the generals to fight.

sustain its life against the assaults of wind and rain. . . . It was nearly an hour before anything definite was received, but at 5:30 an officer came galloping through the woods with a report from Hancock saying he had captured the first line of the enemy's works. This officer was closely followed by another, who reported that many prisoners had been taken. Fifteen minutes later came the announcement that Hancock had captured two general officers. General Grant sent Burnside this news with a message saying, "Push on with all vigor." Wright's corps was now ordered to attack on the right of Hancock. Before six o'clock a message from Hancock's headquarters reported the capture of two thousand prisoners, and a quarter of an hour later Burnside sent word that he had driven the enemy back two miles and a half in his front. Hancock called for reinforcements, but Grant had anticipated him and had already ordered troops to his support. The scene at headquarters was now exciting in the extreme. As aides galloped up one after the other in quick succession with stirring bulletins, all bearing the glad tidings of overwhelming success, the group of staff-officers standing about the camp-fire interrupted their active work of receiving, receipting for, and answering despatches by shouts and cheers which made the forest ring. General Grant sat unmoved upon his camp-chair, giving his constant thoughts to devising methods for making the victory complete. At times the smoke from the struggling camp-fire would for a moment blind him, and occasionally a gust of wind would blow the cape of his greatcoat over his face, and cut off his voice in the middle of a sentence. Only once during the scene he rose from his seat and paced up and down for about ten minutes. He made very few comments upon the stirring events which were crowding so closely upon one another until the reports came in regarding the prisoners. When the large numbers captured were announced, he said, with the first trace of animation he had shown: "That's the kind of news I like to hear. I had hoped that a bold dash at daylight would secure a large number of prisoners. Hancock is doing well." This remark was eminently characteristic of the Union commander. His extreme fondness for taking prisoners was manifested in every battle he fought. . . . His desire in this respect was amply gratified, for during the war it fell to his lot to capture a larger number of prisoners than any general of modern times. . . .

While Generals Grant and Meade were talking with General

Johnson by the camp-fire, a despatch came in from Hancock, saying, "I have finished up Johnson, and am now going into Early." General Grant passed this despatch around, but did not read it aloud, as usual, out of consideration for Johnson's feelings. Soon after came another report that Hancock had taken three thousand prisoners; then another that he had turned his captured guns upon the enemy and made a whole division prisoners, including the famous Stonewall Brigade. Burnside now reported that his right had lost its connection with Hancock's corps. General Grant sent him a brief, characteristic note in reply, saying, "Push the enemy with all your might; that's the way to connect." . . .

Besides capturing Generals Stewart and Johnson, he took nearly four thousand prisoners, thirty pieces of artillery, several thousand stands of small arms, and about thirty colors. His troops swept on half a mile, driving the enemy before them in confusion, and did not pause till they encountered a second line of intrenchments. . . .

By six o'clock A. M. Wright was on that portion of the field, and his men were placed on the right of the "angle." Scarcely had he taken up this position when the Confederates made a determined and savage attack upon him; but despite their well-directed efforts they failed to recapture the line. Wright was wounded early in the fight, but refused to leave the field. Hancock had placed some artillery upon high ground, and his guns fired over the heads of our troops and did much execution in the ranks of the enemy. Warren had been directed to make an attack before eight o'clock, in order to prevent the enemy from massing troops upon the center in an effort to retake the "angle," but he was slow in carrying out the order. Although the instructions were of the most positive and urgent character, he did not accomplish the work expected of him. A little before eleven o'clock General Grant became so anxious that he directed General Meade to relieve Warren if he did not attack promptly, and to put General Humphreys in command of his corps. General Meade concurred in this course, and said that he would have relieved Warren without an order to that effect if there had been any further delay.<sup>22</sup>

Lee counter-attacked all day and was able to maintain his front and retire at night to a line of trenches across the rear of the salient. Although pushed back, Lee was not over-

<sup>22</sup> Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-8,

thrown. He was sorely tried, however, lost heavily in prisoners for those days, and unquestionably came out of this fighting second best.

Various causes have been advanced to account for the failure to exploit Barlow's first success. Let us quote his own words:

It was an accident that we struck this angle, always a weak point in a line; an accident that the morning was misty to an unusual degree; an accident that we found a space for our rush so free from obstacles; an accident that we so escaped the observation of the enemy's outposts and pickets that we were upon them before they could make any substantial resistance.<sup>23</sup>

To whatever cause his success may be attributed, it is plain that a general so minded could not take advantage of any opportunity offered or do more than carry out more than the minimum that his orders required. Grant blamed the failure on Warren's failure to coöperate.

May 18,  
1864

On the eighteenth, at the suggestion of generals Wright and Humphreys, Grant tried a surprise attack on Lee's left flank and was repulsed. Continuous rain ensuing for five days, the battle was broken off. The final engagement resulted from a raid by Ewell around Grant's right flank. Grant ordered Warren to cut him off, but Warren failed once more.

May 23,  
1864

Artillery had been used in both attacks more than was customary in this war. It was massed on Upton's right to support his attack and afterwards to protect his flank and help him extend his front. During the second day's battle, Hancock posted guns in rear of his infantry troops and fired over them.

Neither the development of ordnance, the terrain, nor the roads favored artillery in the Civil War. Case-shot, the Napoleonic weapon, could not outdistance rifle-fire, and the ammunition supply was so limited that, in order to get effective results with shell and solid shot, it was necessary to work the guns within rifle range, at which distance their

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 252.

crews were more vulnerable than the opposing infantry. Guns were most effective when intrenched in a fortified line, a use which gave an additional advantage to the defense. Before crossing the James River, Grant twice reduced the quantity of artillery accompanying him.

Criticism of Grant for engaging in this battle is puerile. He got all his men into the battle. Sigel was holding Jones in front of him in the Shenandoah Valley; Butler still kept the garrison of Richmond and the Carolina troops under Beauregard in his front; Sherman had flanked Johnston out of Buzzard's Roost; and Sheridan was beating Lee's cavalry, had cut the railroad in Lee's rear, and was there to turn a retreat into a capitulation. If ever a commander-in-chief had set the stage for a Cannae, Grant had. A commander can do no more, and he came close to success the second day. If Hancock had been a great instead of a good general, if a Lawler had been present at the vital spot instead of a Barlow, the rebellion would have been destroyed on May 12, 1864.

On the ninth, Burnside—at whose door opportunity had knocked so often without response—had been offered the greatest chance of the many opportunities the war offered him. Happenstance placed his corps in Lee's unprotected rear. If he had assumed the responsibility without orders and attacked, as Granger did at Chickamauga, he would have won the war. Seldom has such a chance for glory fallen to man's lot. As always, he let it pass. Grant did not blame him, but time has taken its revenge; the man who failed in every emergency is known only as the originator of a peculiar form of tonsorial adornment.<sup>24</sup>

Opposing Grant was a veteran and hitherto victorious army in strong field-works, armed with muzzle-loading rifles, and commanded by a great general. That Grant failed in his great endeavor is no reproach to him, but everlasting glory to Lee and the Army of Virginia. If Grant did not win, at least he was not destroyed as Napoleon was at Waterloo;

<sup>24</sup> Sideburns.

nor was he defeated in his campaign as Marlborough had been at Malplaquet.

With no more justice may Lee be criticized for taking so frightful a risk and undergoing such fearful losses. His alternative was to retreat into the fortifications of Richmond and submit to the siege that was eventually to destroy his cause. He had learned from the Battle of the Wilderness that he could not defeat his enemy; here he showed that he could not be beaten in the field. Not until he was surprised by the moves Grant had taught himself in the West and of which Lee knew nothing was he shut up in his works.

The battle formations prescribed by Wright for Upton, who led the first day's attack, and by Hancock for Barlow on the second day are much criticized today when we have at our disposal the experiences of the World War which exhausted the glossary of possible military errors. It is patent now that the Army of the Potomac was following the mistaken infantry tactics of the French Empire, tactics that were mistaken when musketry was effective only up to sixty yards, when infantry could be shot to pieces by artillery standing far beyond musket range in preparation before the charge of the infantry drawn up as a phalanx, and how much more mistaken in days when the rifle was accurate up to a quarter of a mile, and artillery, for lack of ammunition, not effective at a greater one. In defense of Wright and Hancock, it may be pointed out that the same errors had been committed at Sebastopol and Solferino and were to be reenacted in the Moltke wars, at Plevna, in the Turko-Greek War, in South Africa, the Balkan wars, and World War in which the Germans

dragged out their machine-guns, to pour an unslackening hail of lead into the unduly dense waves of the attackers—for 1916 marked the nadir of infantry attacks, the revival of formations that were akin to the eighteenth century in their formalism and lack of manœuvring power. Battalions attacked in four or eight waves, not more than a hundred yards apart, the men in each almost shoulder to shoulder, in a symmetrical well-dressed alignment, and taught to

advance steadily upright at a slow walk with their rifles held aslant in front of them, bayonets upwards—so as to catch the eye of the observant enemy. An excellent imitation of Frederick's infantry automata, with the difference that they were no longer advancing against muskets of an effective range of barely a hundred yards. It is hardly remarkable that by nightfall on July 1 many battalions were barely a hundred strong.<sup>25</sup>

And I feel sure that all of these errors will be made when battle rages again. The mistakes will recur, not only because it is better military form to lose with Napoleon than to win with Wellington, but for the same reason that Napoleon made them. Mass formations are hard on the troops but easy on the generals, and in war the generals cast the deciding vote.

Grant, of course, was guided in his decisions to attack by his successes in the West, where he profited by both the natural capacity of his woodsmen and plainsmen for marching and for fighting in open order or no order. They did not bunch into mobs as Barlow's and Upton's men did, and undoubtedly their officers, themselves woodsmen and plainsmen, were less controlled by the drill-books than were the city men of the East, unaccustomed to campaigning in any form. He could not change the tactics in which the Army of the Potomac was trained, though he often tried to get his generals to fight without making "dispositions."

And here let me quote again from Schaff's *The Battle of the Wilderness*:

All the flags save one captured from the enemy in the Wilderness were taken by western regiments. The Twenty-fourth Michigan captured the colors of the Forty-eighth Virginia, the Fifth Wisconsin those of the Twenty-fifth, the Twentieth Indiana those of the Fifty-fifth, the Seventh Indiana those of the Fiftieth Virginia; the Fifth Michigan those of the Thirteenth North Carolina. The Eighth Ohio and the Fourteenth Indiana retook Ricketts's guns. The men from the West were probably no braver, man for man, than those of the East; but I think their success was wholly because so many

<sup>25</sup> Liddell Hart, *The Real War: 1914-1918*, p. 234.

of the men were woods-wise. From their youth up, both by day and by night, they had roamed through woods under all sorts of sky and in all sorts of weather, and so their depths had no terror for them; like their enemies, they were at home in the timber, and could make their way through it almost as well by night as by day. And I have often thought that perhaps it was this common knowledge of the woods that gave our western armies so many victories.<sup>26</sup>

At the close of the day Grant's personal staff urged him to relieve Meade and give orders directly to the corps- and division-commanders. They felt not only was time lost, but also the inspiration of Grant's battle-mood upon the troops. Certain is it that if the Army of the Potomac moved and fought from the Rapidan to the James as it had never done before, it showed nothing of the speed and elasticity of the Army of the Tennessee or the drive that Granger's corps displayed at Chattanooga.

Grant refused to do this, observing that in addition to his duties as commander-in-chief he could not undertake the manifold details of commander of the Army of the Potomac.

Now bad news came thick and fast, showing how wise Grant had been to make his great attack while the enemy troops were all employed. Although Sherman was advancing slowly, Butler had delayed his advance upon Richmond while Beauregard gathered his forces, had then been repulsed at Drury's Bluff south of Richmond, and had retreated to his camp at Bermuda Hundred behind an entrenchment across the narrow neck of land where he used entanglements made from telegraph wire with great effect. Beauregard built another trench across the neck and, in the expressive phrase Grant quoted from General Barnard, "bottled him up."

While missing victory and even great success, Butler's campaign was far from barren. He had made the indispensable lodgment on the south side of the James River near Richmond and Petersburg, where Grant planned "to bring



the Armies of the Potomac and the James together," and he held it until the end. There he built a high observation-tower from which he watched and reported all daylight movements of troops near Richmond and Petersburg. On the other hand, he allowed a part of Beauregard's troops to become available for Lee.

Sigel had advanced down the valley to New Market where he was beaten by an equal force under Breckinridge, and retreated in confusion to Cedar Creek while his opponents joined the Army of Northern Virginia. Sigel probably had more book-education than any American-born soldier. His movements were in strict obedience to orders and his dispositions according to the textbooks. It is likely that his troops—the American part of them—disliked him and did not fight well under him.

Halleck's campaign up the Red River in Arkansas had met defeat at Sabine Cross Roads, and the advance from Mobile had to be abandoned. The tide of war had changed again.

How many well-known leaders could have borne up under such an avalanche of disaster? Frederick the Great had done so, and so had Washington; few others could. Grant was one of them.

Under the circumstances it was impracticable to continue his attack. It was equally undesirable to accept a check and surrender the initiative. As he says in his *Memoirs*,

All this news was very discouraging. All of it must have been known by the enemy before it was by me. In fact, the good news (for the enemy) must have been known to him at the moment I thought he was in despair, and his anguish had been already relieved when we were enjoying his supposed discomfiture. *But this was no time for repining. I immediately gave orders for a movement by the left flank on toward Richmond, to commence on the night of the 19th. I also asked Halleck to secure the coöperation of the navy in changing our base of supplies from Fredericksburg to Port Royal, on the Rappanhanneck.*<sup>27</sup>

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1864

<sup>27</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 142. Italics mine.

He now hoped that Lee, encouraged and enforced, might take the offensive if given an opportunity, and prepared for him the following stratagem.

He sent Hancock's corps a day's march ahead of the army in the direction of Richmond, with orders to engage any forces he might encounter. Grant hoped that Lee would learn of Hancock's apparent isolation and concentrate the Confederate army to crush him, in which event Grant meant to bring up the Army of the Potomac and catch Lee out of intrenchments.

The stratagem was well conceived. Lee's temperament was to attack. Attack had been the key of most of his successes. Moreover, we know now from his telegram to the Secretary of War that he had attack in mind:

SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

8:40 A. M. May 21, 1864

MAY 21,  
1864

HON. J. A. SEDDON, SECRETARY OF WAR:

The enemy is apparently again changing his base. Three (3) gunboats came up to Port Royal two days since. This morning an infantry force appeared at Guinea's. His cavalry advance at Downer's bridge on Bowling Green Road. He is apparently placing the Mattapony between us, and will probably open communication with Port Royal. I am extending on the Telegraph road, and will regulate my movements by the information . . . of his route. *I fear [it] will secure him from attack till he crosses Pamunkey.*

R. E. LEE<sup>28</sup>

But, as in his message after the Wilderness, his deductions represented wishful thinking rather than facts. Actually he and his army had been so weakened in the past two weeks that even though reinforced by General Breckinridge from the Valley and General Pickett from Drury's Bluff, he was not vigorous enough to assume the offensive.

So, far from avoiding attack, Hancock was offering the chance to make one. He marched, unsupported, by Guinea Station and Bowling Green and, crossing the Mattapony at

<sup>28</sup> Humphreys, *op. cit.*, XII, 121. Italics mine.

Milford, captured intact both the highway and railroad bridges at that point. Warren crossed the Po at Guinea still closer to the enemy.

Lee did not attack Hancock, and the movement developed into another march around Lee's right flank and brought the armies into contact across the North Anna River about half-way between Spottsylvania and Richmond. For instead of accepting the challenge, Lee had moved to a new intrenched position in front of Hanover Junction across the three main roads to Richmond—the Telegraph road, the Richmond and Potomac Railroad, and the Virginia Central Railroad. The Virginia Central ran north from Richmond and, after crossing the Richmond and Potomac Railroad at the North Anna River, ran west and then south through western Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to Chattanooga and Atlanta. It was vitally important for Lee to hold this railroad to supply his army.

Advancing in parallel columns, with minor skirmishes and attacks, Grant pushed Lee into his trenches. In his final position Grant's two wings were south of the North Anna River and his center (Burnside) north of it, unable to cross. It was an unfavorable position from which to attack, and Lee himself was too weak to attack. Grant, however, had scored a great strategic success in getting his right flank across the Virginia Central Railroad.

Here on May 26th Sheridan and his cavalry rejoined the Army of the Potomac.

While the generals of the armies of Virginia and the Potomac concentrated their attention upon the tactical situation, Grant uncorked one of the methods he had developed in the West. He wrecked both railroads so thoroughly that he could move away from them without opening for Lee either a line from which to draw supplies or one with which he could support a direct advance on Washington.

May 27.  
1864

This accomplished, Grant withdrew across the river and resumed his flanking operations. He then ordered the great pontoon-train from Washington to Newport News to carry

his army across the James River in pursuit of the plan he had explained to Halleck while at Culpeper.

Lee did not understand Grant's operation against the railways. He expected to be attacked, and, skilfully placed as he was, with his center protected by the North Anna River, he awaited the issue confidently, intending, no doubt, first to repulse Grant's assaults and then to concentrate a counter-attack against one of Grant's flanks separated from the other by two crossings of the river. When he found that Grant had withdrawn from his front and was turning his position again, he broke out to Hill:

"Why did you let these people cross the river? Why did you not drive them back as General Jackson would have done," and later on to his staff he exclaimed: "We must never let them pass us again! We must strike them!"<sup>29</sup>

General Fuller comments on this:

If Hill had failed to strike on the 23rd, why did not Lee strike on the 25th? I do not think that it was sickness which prevented him from doing so, but the attrition he had suffered in the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania.<sup>30</sup>

Grant did pass them again twice, and Lee did not strike.

Lee's outburst is a tribute to Grant's generalship. It indicates how splendid a manœuvre he felt Grant had made in withdrawing his right flank from Lee's front and crossing the river in rear of his army.

Grant evidently considered this an outstanding manœuvre. We can perceive this from the account in his *Memoirs* and also from his contemporaneous report to Lincoln through Halleck:

QUARLES'S MILLS, VIRGINIA

May 26, 1864

MAJOR-GENERAL HALLECK,

Washington, D. C.:

The relative position of the two armies is now as follows: Lee's

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

right rests on a swamp east of the Richmond and Fredericksburg road and south of the North Anna, his center on the river at Ox Ford, and his left at Little River, with the crossings of Little River guarded as far up as we have gone. Hancock with his corps and one division of the Ninth Corps crossed at Chesterfield Ford and covers the right wing of Lee's army. One division of the Ninth Corps is on the north bank of the Anna at Ox Ford, with bridges above and below at points nearest to it where both banks are held by us, so that it could reinforce either wing of our army with equal facility. The Fifth and Sixth corps, with one division of the Ninth Corps, run from the south bank of the Anna from a short distance above Ox Ford to Little River, and parallel with and near to the enemy.

To make a direct attack from either wing would cause a slaughter of our men that even success would not justify. To turn the enemy by his right, between the two Annas, is impossible on account of the swamp upon which his right rests. To turn him by the left leaves Little River, New Found River, and South Anna River—all of them streams presenting considerable obstacles to the movement of our army—to be crossed. I have determined, therefore, to turn the enemy's right by crossing at or near Hanover Town. This crosses all three streams at once, and leaves us still where we can draw supplies.

During the last night the teams and artillery not in position, belonging to the right wing of our army, and one division of that wing, were quietly withdrawn to the north bank of the river and moved down to the rear of the left. As soon as it is dark this division, with most of the cavalry, will commence a forced march for Hanover Town, to seize and hold the crossings. The balance of the right wing will withdraw at the same hour, and follow as rapidly as possible. The left wing will also withdraw from the south bank of the river to-night and follow in rear of the right wing.

Lee's army is really whipped. The prisoners we now take show it, and the action of his army shows it unmistakably. A battle with them outside of intrenchments cannot be had. Our men feel that they have gained the morale over the enemy, and attack him with confidence. I may be mistaken, but I feel that our success over Lee's army is already assured. The promptness and rapidity with which you have forwarded reinforcements has contributed largely to the

feeling of confidence inspired in our men, and to break down that of the enemy.

*We are destroying all the rails we can on the Central and Fredericksburg roads. I want to leave a gap on the roads north of Richmond so big that to get a single track they will have to import rail from elsewhere.*

Even if a crossing is not effected at Hanover Town, it will probably be necessary for us to move on down the Pamunkey until a crossing is effected. I think it advisable, therefore, to change our base of supplies from Port Royal to the White House. I wish you would direct this change at once, and also direct Smith to put the railroad-bridge there in condition for crossing troops and artillery, and leave men to hold it.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-General.*<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, a profound change had taken place in the relations between the two armies. Before the fighting in the Wilderness the Army of Virginia had moved freely and struck the Army of the Potomac at will, while the Army of the Potomac had stood upon a timid defensive interrupted by a series of hysterical, short-lived offensives. Since then the Army of the Potomac was making contact and breaking off engagements as it wished, the Army of Virginia conforming to its movements with no object beyond maintaining itself and protecting the bastion of Richmond.

The point had now been reached in his advance where it was even more important to Grant to secure lines that would enable him to reach the James River near City Point than to risk losing them in the hope of bringing on a battle in the open. Therefore, to obtain a head start by deceiving Lee into the belief that he was moving around his left, Grant sent Wilson's division in that direction with orders to wreck further the Virginia Central Railroad while Sheridan with the other two cavalry divisions led the advance in order to seize the strategic points on the line of march.

May 27,  
1864

The army crossed the Pamunkey River on the twenty-

<sup>21</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 153-54. Italics mine.







seventh and twenty-eighth of May in the wake of Sheridan's cavalry, which cleared the Confederate cavalry from the path, then pushed forward and found Lee's army extending from the Virginia Central Railroad along the Totopotomoy River.

To Lee, the movement had every appearance of a determined effort to interpose between him and Richmond. Accordingly, he marched to his right across Grant's front. Grant in turn thought that Lee was trying to interpose between him, and Cold Harbor now became indispensable to Grant to protect his communications with the new base at White House by which Smith's corps of Butler's army was to join him, and also to protect his further advance to the James River. He therefore sent Sheridan there and also moved his infantry in that direction. The enemy did likewise, and, the armies being in contact and moving parallel out of intrenchments for the first time since the Wilderness, Grant ordered his corps-commanders to attack at any opportunity without reporting to him or awaiting orders.

He even gave Warren specific orders to attack. Warren was now quite broken by the violence of the campaign. Other generals were not in better spirit. Consequently, nothing came of Grant's orders.

He was greatly irritated by the timidity and hesitation of his generals, so unlike the vigor of Sherman, McClelland, Prentiss and McPherson in the great days of the Army of the Tennessee. Meeting Wilson, one of the officers he had brought with him from the West, he said, according to the latter:

"Wilson, what is the matter with this army?" I replied at once: "General, there is a great deal the matter with it, but I can tell you much more easily how to cure it." Whereupon he asked me: "How?" "Send for Parker, the Indian chief, and after giving him a tomahawk, a scalping knife, and a gallon of the worst whiskey the Commissary Department can supply, send him out with orders to bring in the scalps of major-generals." This brought a smile to the General's face, promptly followed by the question: "Whose?"

Quite as promptly, I replied: "Oh, the first he comes to, and so on in succession till he gets at least a dozen." The General evidently understood what I meant and far from resenting my suggestion, without a moment's pause, asked: "But where shall we get generals to fill their places?" To which I replied: "Oh, that's easy! To use a favorite phrase of yours, every brigadier in this army 'will step up and take sugar in his'n.' " <sup>32</sup>

But Grant could do nothing about them at the moment. It would have made chaos to remove his corps-commanders during so vital a manœuver.

Sheridan found enemy cavalry intrenched in New Cold Harbor, did attack the key position and captured it. He performed his mission, though his fellow corps-commanders had failed in theirs. Then finding that the Confederate infantry were massing in his front and fearing for the existence of his corps, Sheridan withdrew from New Cold Harbor during the night. He had hardly left his position when he received orders to hold New Cold Harbor at all cost. He returned before the Confederates had learned of his departure, rebuilt the barricades in the town, and the following morning withstood severe attacks from Anderson's corps until the arrival of Hancock's troops secured the position. He then moved farther out on the left flank.

Grant had now secured his base at White House and his roads to the James River and Petersburg. Before abandoning the attempt to smash Lee in the field and turn finally to his other alternatives, he attempted one more assault. This became the over-celebrated battle of Cold Harbor. He prepared for it with all of his characteristic care, bringing Smith's fresh corps by ferry from Bermuda Hundred to White House. He had these troops escorted by a brigade of Sheridan's cavalry to the left of the line.

Much might have been anticipated from the attack of Smith's fresh troops. But Smith, as he had demonstrated to Lincoln in the Gettysburg campaign and was to show to

Grant at Petersburg, had no heart to command in battle. The troops of the Army of the Potomac were fed up.

It has been pointed out elsewhere that troops improve for awhile in training and in combat and then deteriorate. This is especially so of troops, used in attacks that do not carry all before them. Meade's troops were probably at their best the first three days at Spottsylvania. When Hancock's attack failed to break through Lee's center, the last chance for the Army of the Potomac to win by assault was gone. At Cold Harbor the troops only advanced until taken under fire, when they took such cover as the country afforded and stopped.

The peace-at-any-price faction in the North made the most of this repulse, building up a mythology of bloodshed, horror, and despair that has been drawn upon by the writers of false history ever since. That the men invented identity disks such as were universally used in the World War has even been heralded as a sign of their resignation. The losses in this engagement were not heavy for the Civil War and almost insignificant in comparison with the losses incurred in assaults during the World War. But even after the World War Grant's detractors continue grossly to misrepresent them.

The manœuvre at Cold Harbor seems to have been urged by Colonel Comstock, who is described as an expert on taking fortified places. He was no more of an expert by experience than Grant or the other staff-officers. We must assume therefore that his expertness came from reading the methods of Vauban, a genius far in advance of his day—a day long past—and of other generals who had won victories in the era of feeble gun-fire. He was thus an ill-prepared counselor for Civil War conditions. One must not be led to deprecate education, however, for education is immensely valuable as a slave, but is tyrannous as a master. This distinction is made too little by the educated and by educators.

The attack was not without value in holding Lee in front of Grant while Hunter defeated Jones in the valley and oc-

cupied Staunton, an important point on the Virginia Central Railroad, and in keeping Lee's soldiers in their trenches alert for more assaults during Grant's march to the James River.

Still, at the close of the Battle of Cold Harbor Lee had every reason to feel pleased. The feebleness of the attacks, the despondency of the prisoners, Grant's asking permission to rescue his wounded all pointed to the end of the desperate battles that Lee had endured with the intrepidity of a Bayard. His refusal to allow Grant to save his wounded was entirely within the classic school of war of which he was the last great, perhaps the greatest, exponent.

Wisely Lee had ignored Hunter's ride up the valley. A master of "economy of forces," he had massed his troops at the decisive spot. Now he could detach to take care of Hunter and also of Sheridan on some raid on his left and rear. He could feel that he had Grant penned. He held him in front. On the left were impassable swamps. A move to the right would bring Grant no advantage but would open his supply-line to attack.

It looked like a checkmate. Lee was still champion of those dimensions of war in which he was versed. To his consternation Grant knew a fourth dimension.

## CHAPTER X

### PETERSBURG

GRANT was no whit cast down by the repulse, and continued preparations for his further advance. Dissension appeared among high officers. Warren, often disobedient as a subordinate, and Rawlins, whose letters to his wife show an estrangement from Grant after Chattanooga, met Assistant Secretary of War Dana and denounced Grant's methods. It is natural to suppose that Dana repeated the conversation in Washington. In any event, Halleck thought the time propitious to put in his oar, and with his customary obtuseness to military situations he advised Grant to invest Richmond from the north. Grant replied in a letter I reproduce because it shows him continuing a well-conceived plan, not repulsed and seeking desperate expedients, as his detractors claim in contradiction to the evidence, and because it gives his opinion of the military situation. The opinion of the general who follows that opinion to victory is the only one worth considering:

COLD HARBOR, June 5, 1864.

MAJOR-GENERAL HALLECK,  
*Chief of Staff of the Army,*  
*Washington, D. C.:*

A full survey of all the ground satisfies me that it would be impracticable to hold a line northeast of Richmond that would protect the Fredericksburg railroad, to enable us to use that road for supplying the army. To do so would give us a long vulnerable line of road to protect, exhausting much of our strength to guard it, and would leave open to the enemy all of his lines of communication on the south side of the James. *My idea from the start has been to beat Lee's army, if possible, north of Richmond; then, after destroying his lines of communication on the north side of the James River, to*

June 5,  
1864

*transfer the army to the south side and besiege Lee in Richmond, or follow him south if he should retreat.*

I now find, after over thirty days of trial, the enemy deems it of first importance to run no risks with the armies they now have. They act purely on the defensive behind breastworks, or feebly on the offensive immediately in front of them, and where in case of repulse they can instantly retire behind them. Without a greater sacrifice of human life than I am willing to make, all cannot be accomplished that I had designed outside of the city. I have therefore resolved upon the following plan:

I will continue to hold substantially the ground now occupied by the Army of the Potomac, taking advantage of any favorable circumstance that may present itself, until the cavalry can be sent west to destroy the Virginia Central railroad from about Beaver Dam for some twenty-five or thirty miles west. When this is effected I will move the army to the south side of the James River, either by crossing the Chickahominy and marching near to City Point, or by going to the mouth of the Chickahominy on north side and crossing there. To provide for this last and most possible contingency, several ferry-boats of the largest class ought to be immediately provided.

Once on the south side of the James River, I can cut off all sources of supply to the enemy except what is furnished by the canal. If Hunter succeeds in reaching Lynchburg, that will be lost to him also. Should Hunter not succeed, I will still make the effort to destroy the canal by sending cavalry up the south side of the river with a pontoon-train to cross wherever they can.

The feeling of the two armies now seems to be that the rebels can protect themselves only by strong intrenchments, whilst our army is not only confident of protecting itself without intrenchments, but that it can beat and drive the enemy wherever and whenever he can be found without this protection.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-General*<sup>1</sup>

The view of the situation and the opinion entertained of Grant at Lee's headquarters is contained in a letter written by a member of Lee's staff two days later. I present it here in

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, 174-75, footnote. Italics mine.

full to avoid the appearance of changing the meaning by elision:

HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE,  
NEAR MECHANICSVILLE, HANOVER COUNTY, VA., June 7, 1864.

MAJ. GEN. STERLING PRICE,

*Commanding District of Arkansas:*

MY DEAR GENERAL: Since active operations commenced on the Rapidan and the enemy crossed over, I have been riding with the staff of General Lee, and so passed through the battles of the Wilderness, of Spottsylvania Court House, and of those since fought here on the line of the Chickahominy. Up to this time our loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners does not exceed 18,000, while that of the enemy in similar respects is not less than 70,000. But both armies have been built up through re-enforcements to their original standard, and other battles have still to be fought equally bloody with the bloodiest. Here on the Chickahominy we occupy McClellan's old line, with this difference, we face to the east, whereas he faced to the west; hence Jackson's attack upon him was in his rear, whereas Grant's attack on us is to our front. From first to last Grant has shown great skill and prudence combined with remorseless persistency and brutality. He is a scientific Goth resembling Alaric, destroying the country as he goes, and delivering the people over to starvation. Nor does he bury his dead, but leaves them to rot on the battle-field. He has commenced again sliding his right down past his left, doubtless in order to reach Bottom's Bridge and the long Bridge, with the intention of crossing to the Richmond side. Lee, accordingly, is throwing down his left. On both sides I apprehend the lines will be contracted and massed, and a desperate encounter take place in the course of the movement. In view of the fact, just arrived by telegraph, that the enemy in the Valley have defeated and killed General Jones and taken Staunton, and now have the Valley at their mercy—the remainder of our troops having been drawn here under Breckinridge from that quarter—it may be, and probably is, Grant's design to make across the James River to seize our communications, and thus to assure the destruction of our supplies and compel a surrender ultimately through starvation. Should he succeed in getting over the James and in forming his lines across our railroads on the south side,

our situation will be at least uncomfortable, if not alarming, and I am unable to see, without the intervention of some special Providence, any assurance of a successful termination of the war on our part this year or the next. But Providence and a good cause may save us here as they seem to have saved you all in the Trans-Mississippi in despite of bad management and against every human calculation.

The game going on upon the military chessboard between Lee and Grant has been striking and grand, surpassing anything I have heretofore witnessed, and conducted on both sides with consummate mastery of the art of war. It is admitted that Lee has at last met with a foeman who matches his steel, although he may not be worthy of it. Each guards himself perfectly and gives his blow with a precise eye and cool and sanguinary nerve. In Lee's army everything is reduced down to the smallest compass, and the discipline and obedience of the officers and men is perfect. Your own headquarters establishment is more numerous and bulky. He rides with only three members of his staff and never takes with him an extra horse or servant, although he is upon the lines usually from daybreak until dark. He is almost unapproachable, and yet no man is more simple, or less ostentatious, hating all pretension. It would be impossible for an officer to be more revered, admired, and respected. He eats the ration of the soldier and quarters alone in his tent. Without parade, haughtiness, or assumption he is elevated in his thought and feeling, and is worthy of the cause he represents and the army he commands. And now, I wish to say I have found myself laboring under the odium of the little West Pointers in Richmond and their partisans. They oppose me in the War Office at all points in regard to any and every wish, and seek to drive me to a resignation. There is one favor I wish you to do me. The horse that Major Monroe let me have on my receipt was taken possession of at the river by Kelso, who was with Norton when we crossed the Mississippi. He also took charge of my saddle and bridle. He returned to your command with this horse, saddle, and bridle. If I do not resign I shall rejoin you, and I wish this horse and accoutrements secured by your quartermaster against my arrival, and in any event my receipt for the horse to Major Monroe be canceled, so that the claim will not come against me hereafter. I also got an ambulance from Major Hill when I went to Texas. True, it was broken down and I did not receipt for it, but doubtless



it stands charged against me. Norton had it repaired and returned to your command in this ambulance, and I returned with your son.

Please have this ambulance turned over to your quartermaster and receipted for to me also, and believe me, as ever, very truly, your friend,

JOHN TYLER,  
*C. S. Army.*<sup>2</sup>

The base of Grant's army was now at White House, the great pontoon-train had been sent to City Point, ships had been loaded with stone to block access to the bridge to Confederate gunboats at Richmond. The left bank of the Pamunkey had been fortified. Everything was ready to consummate that part of his plan which he had outlined to Halleck at the beginning of the campaign and to join the Army of the Potomac to that of the James.

But he was not yet satisfied to undertake the siege of Lee in the fortifications. He proposed to take Petersburg by assault. Then he would meet Lee in a battle of contact between or west of Petersburg and Richmond, for Lee could not remain in Richmond if Petersburg were lost.

More than when entering the Wilderness is the plan of campaign against Petersburg reminiscent of Vicksburg. Again he was to put a great river behind him, again depend upon surprise, and again need a commander for his advance-guard who would not fail him in the crisis; again he was to need coöperation between troop and supply movements, and, above all, rapid movements. Once more he conducted diversions to distract Lee as he had done to distract Pemberton before he crossed the Mississippi. He sent Sheridan to cut the railroads on Lee's left flank—reminiscent of Sherman's and Steele's demonstrations at Haines's Bluff and Rolling Fork—and he called Hunter to raid the Valley as he had sent Grierson to raid east of Jackson, Mississippi.

Sheridan's orders were to march to Charlottesville and

<sup>2</sup> *War of the Rebellion, Official Records*, LI, series 1, pp. 993-95. See also J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 375.

there meet Hunter arriving from the Shenandoah Valley. The combined forces were then to thoroughly destroy<sup>3</sup> the Virginia Central Railroad, the James River Canal, and, if possible, the factories making war supplies at Lynchburg. After completing these operations they were to join the armies before Petersburg.

June 8,  
1864

Sheridan left his camp at New Castle Ferry on June 8th with Gregg's and Torbert's divisions. Marching up the north bank of the North Anna, as Grant had marched up the Big Black so as to have the river to protect his flank, he crossed it on the eleventh and simultaneously struck the railroad and Hampton's cavalry sent by Lee to intercept him. A confused battle followed, for which both he and Hampton claimed the credit, though he held the field at close of day.

June 11,  
1864

Sheridan learned from prisoners that Hunter was headed toward Lynchburg and that Breckinridge's infantry division was between him and Charlottesville. Therefore, finding it impracticable to obey his orders, Sheridan started back the next day after doing a little damage to the railroad, to find his retreat blocked by Hampton. Repulsed in the ensuing action, he left his severely wounded behind and marched by Spottsylvania and Bowling Green to King and Queen Court House, from which point he sent his prisoners and his slightly wounded to West Point and returned to White House.

June 20,  
1864

Arriving there on the twentieth, the second day following he found orders to conduct the wagon-train of the Army

<sup>3</sup> On reading the text Mr. C. L. Raymond remarked that the word "destroy" did not require the qualification "thoroughly." This called attention to an amusing fragment of military history:

The cavalry, as the successor of the knights, has always remained the aristocratic arm of the service, has always wanted to fight on horseback and with swords, and has objected to dismounted fighting and especially to work. This feudal tendency inoculated the cavalry of the United States and even spread to the volunteer cavalry (as I know, for I have served in it), but was never found in the regular artillery (as I know also, for I have served in that).

Sherman was especially bitter in his denunciations of the cavalry's failure to carry out destruction thoroughly. Grant found it necessary to order his cavalry to "thoroughly destroy." I quoted the words from his order.

of the Potomac, which had been left at White House, to the pontoon-bridge across the James River at Deep Bottom. General Hampton defeated this move by attacking and severely handling General Gregg's division acting as flank-guard. Gregg saved all the wagons, however, and Sheridan ferried the wagon-train, and after it the cavalry, across the James River.

In this expedition the Confederates had somewhat the best of the fighting and prevented any serious damage to the Virginia Central Railroad, but they failed to capture or injure the wagon-train of the Army of the Potomac.

Although not a tactical success, the march was a strategic victory, as it drew the Confederate cavalry away from the marching flank of the Army of the Potomac and enabled Grant to cross the James River with his whole army and attack Petersburg, while Lee thought he was still on the north bank.

A brigade of Wilson's cavalry and Warren's corps crossed the Chickahominy at Long Bridge and took a position facing Riddles Shop, where they both acted as rear-guard of the army and gave the impression of an advance on Richmond or Bermuda Hundred.

June 12,  
1864

The generals of the Army of the Potomac having all disappointed him in varying measure, Grant chose for his advance-guard commander General W. F. Smith. General Smith had earned golden opinions from Grant for his activities at Chattanooga, where he had not only made many of the plans of battle, but in the presence of his chief had played an active, if minor, part in carrying them out. He was familiar with the terrain and was preferred over General Butler because of the latter's failure at Drury's Bluff.

General Smith and his corps were marched to White House and sent by steamer to City Point ahead of the army to surprise and storm Petersburg. Arrived at City Point, they received some six thousand reinforcements, including three thousand cavalry under General Kautz, who had not only reconnoitered but actually ridden over the fortifica-

June 14,  
1864

tions four days before as part of a movement by the Tenth Corps of Butler's army to take the city—a movement which failed through the timidity of General Gillmore, the corps-commander. His consequent removal was the first of the series that was to give the army an entirely new group of corps-commanders before Appomattox. General Smith's corps and his reinforcements then landed near Point of Rocks and started for the Petersburg lines in good time.

Hancock was put next in line as the most energetic of the Army of the Potomac corps-commanders, his corps crossing the James River at Wilcox's Landing both by ferry and pontoon-bridge to follow Smith into Petersburg. Burnside was to follow Hancock, then Warren was to withdraw from Lee's new front and pass over before Wright, who would become rear-guard at the bridge-head.

Up to this point both Grant's plan and its execution by Meade, Butler, and their subordinates were classic. Now followed contemptible failure.

No one had been quicker than Smith to criticize the conduct of others. But, arrived in face of the enemy in responsible command, he was overcome with indecision. An outpost delayed him. The appearance of the enemy works appalled him. He spent hours studying them—from a distance. After a partial and timid attack which was entirely successful because unopposed, during which he took five redans and two and a half miles of the enemy's first line, opening a hole through which he could have marched his force which was at least four times as strong as the defenders, he stood upon a stubborn and frightened defensive from which General Butler could not budge him.

June 15,  
1864

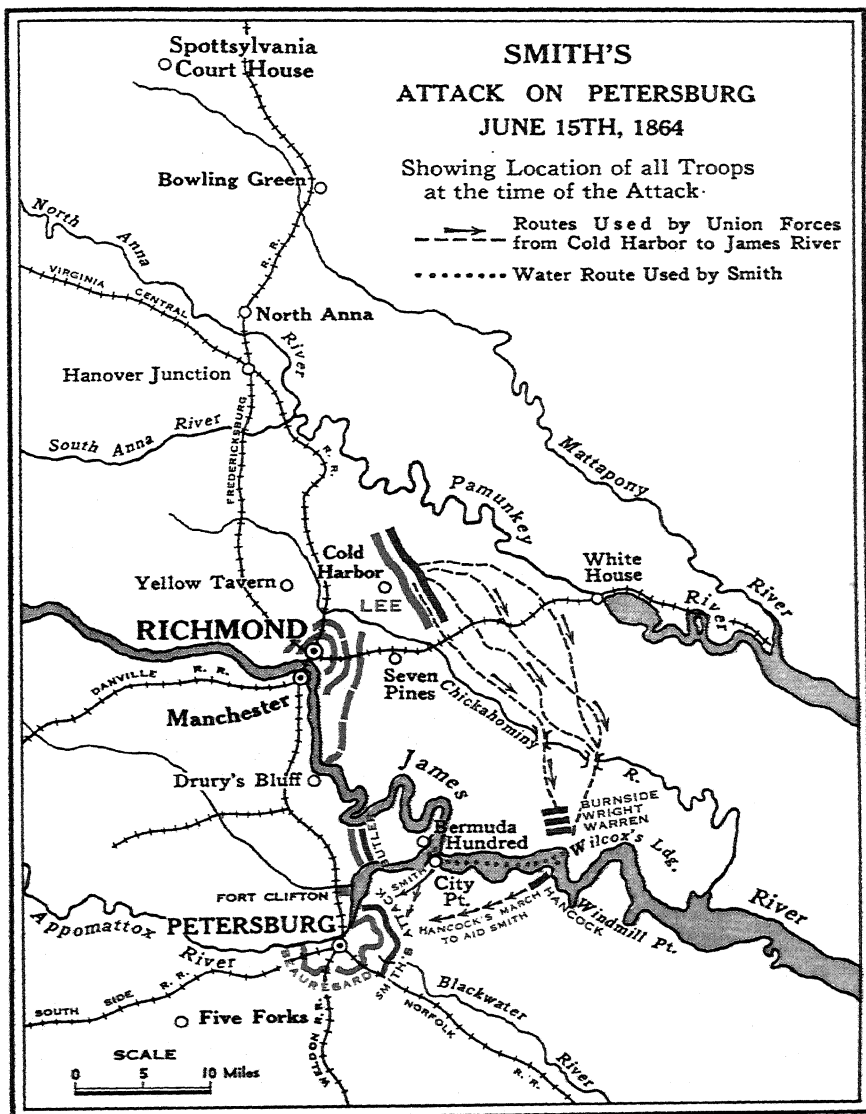
June 15,  
1864

At 7:20 P. M. on June 15, Butler telegraphed Smith: "I grieve for the delays. Time is the essence of this movement. I doubt not the delays were necessary, but now push and get the Appomattox between you and Lee. Nothing has passed down the railroad to harm you yet." At 9 P. M. Smith replied: "I must have the Army of the Potomac reinforcements immediately." At 9.30 Butler telegraphed back; "Hancock has been ordered up by General Grant

# SMITH'S ATTACK ON PETERSBURG JUNE 15TH, 1864

Showing Location of all Troops  
at the time of the Attack.

→ Routes Used by Union Forces  
from Cold Harbor to James River  
- - - - - Water Route Used by Smith





and my orders. Another army corps will reach you by 10 A. M. tomorrow. It is crossing. They have not got 10,000 men down yet. Push on to the Appomattox." Then, ten minutes later: "Did you make the attack contemplated? What was the result? Please answer by telegram." The answer was sent off at midnight, and was as follows: "It is impossible for me to go further tonight, but unless I misapprehend the topography I hold the key to Petersburg. General Hancock not yet up."<sup>4</sup>

Hancock had been hurried across the James to be ready to act as a reserve for the Army of the James at the disposal of the commander-in-chief. When Smith began to show his indecision and incapacity, Hancock was ordered up, arrived on the scene late, and did nothing effective that night or the next morning, although he was the senior officer present. He came in for a share of the criticism aroused by the failure and asked for an investigation. Meade in turn wrote to Grant that

June 16,  
1864

had General Hancock and myself been apprised in time of the contemplated movement against Petersburg and the necessity of his co-operation, I am of the opinion that he could have been pushed much earlier to the scene of operations; but as matters occurred, and with our knowledge of them, I do not see how any censure can be attached to General Hancock and his corps.<sup>5</sup>

Grant himself attached no blame either to Hancock or to Meade and said that there was nothing to investigate. It was Smith's mission—and a very easy one—to take Petersburg, Hancock's duty was to be ready to exploit Smith's success or to reinforce Butler if Lee attacked him. He was on time for a contingency that did not come to pass, but was late for the unexpected contingency that did arise for reasons involving Butler's, Meade's, and his own staff. Grant did not blame him for failing to develop great leadership. He had not shown it in the Wilderness or at Spottsylvania.

It is, however, hard to avoid the impression that Meade

<sup>4</sup> *War of the Rebellion, Official Records*, LXXXIII, 81.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, II, 377.

and Hancock and their staffs were more interested in getting across the James River than in doing anything against the enemy after they got over. How else can we account for the superb logistics of the march to and across the bridge and Hancock's wait of eighteen hours for rations he did not need, while Beauregard was securing Petersburg?

June  
14-15,  
1864

Grant had spent the fourteenth and fifteenth of June passing back and forth between his two army-commanders, Meade at Wilcox's Landing and Butler at Bermuda Hundred, handling the movements of an army and its equipment, vast for their day, with rare skill. He spent the night of the fifteenth at City Point ready to manœuvre his army as the success of his advance-guard and the movements of the enemy should indicate. It was not until almost morning that he learned of Smith's delinquency. He proceeded at once to Petersburg; ordered Burnside, who was coming up, to take post on Hancock's left; and sent for Meade to come with speed and take command of all the troops.

He himself returned to City Point, the sensitive point and juncture of his two armies, where he found that during his absence the Confederate troops confronting Butler were moved out of their trenches to reinforce Petersburg and that General Terry in their front had occupied them and even broken the Petersburg-Richmond railroad in their rear before he was driven back to his own lines by Lee's advancing troops. Grant rushed Wright and two divisions to regain the vital ground, but Wright feared to attack and the chance was lost.

When Meade came on the scene with the Army of the Potomac,<sup>6</sup> instead of outflanking the defenders, he drove his men in deep columns against the intrenchments, as laid down in the French regulations for attacking fortresses—formations which had been effective in the days of matchlock blunderbuss but which were rendered obsolete by flintlock muskets and were tragic in the Civil War. In two days'

<sup>6</sup> G. T. Beauregard, "Four Days of Battle at Petersburg," *Battle and Leaders of the Civil War*, IV, 540.



fighting he captured only six redans at heavy loss. He planned a general attack for the third day, but the following morning he found that the enemy had evacuated his front for a new line in the rear.<sup>7</sup> Before he was ready to attack this line he learned that Lee's army had reached Petersburg.

The siege was about to begin.

Turning now to the Confederate moves, we find that Lee had sent Wade Hampton and most of his cavalry after Sheridan. He had already sent Breckinridge's force back to the valley to confront Hunter, and on the eleventh, just as Grant was about to move, he added Ewell's corps, now under command of General Early. When Wilson and Warren appeared before Riddles Shop, he sent Hill's corps to face them, and when the Army of the Potomac left Cold Harbor he joined Hill with the rest of his army.

Lee was acting entirely within his knowledge and experience of war. The different experience of Lee and Grant dated back to the Mexican War where Lee's practice in tactics began as chief staff-officer after the army was landed, and Grant's included service as quartermaster moving troops by water. All through the Civil War Lee had been confined to land-movements over a somewhat limited terrain. Grant had been moving armies vast distances, and most of his campaigns had been amphibian. It was beyond the experience of Lee to conceive the great move across the James which occurred to Grant at the outset of the campaign.

In command of the Confederate troops south of the James was General Beauregard whose experience at Shiloh had given him some knowledge of river warfare and whose unjust blame for the loss of Shiloh whetted his appreciation of Grant's elasticity and determination. He was in Petersburg with twenty-four hundred troops and as many militia when he heard of the arrival of the Eighteenth Corps at Bermuda Hundred. He notified Lee, asked for help, and

<sup>7</sup> A stratagem repeated, if not copied, by Hindenburg in 1917.

prepared to use his small numbers to full advantage.

June 15,  
1864

It was Beauregard who placed the small force that furnished opposition to Smith's advance at dawn of the fifteenth and caused that timid officer to slow his advance. When pushed back to his lines, he made such a show with his few infantry spaced at four and a half yard intervals and kept up such a fire from the cannon in the works that he held Smith at bay during the whole afternoon.

All that day and the next he kept advising Lee of Grant's movements.<sup>8</sup> But Lee, impressed by the persistency and violence of Grant's attacks during the last forty-two days, feared to weaken his front, and, as he had sent Hampton after Sheridan, and Breckinridge and Early against Hunter, he had neither cavalry to scout around Warren's flanks nor enough infantry to press a reconnaissance. Indeed, Wilson raided around Lee's flank toward Malvern Hill on the fifteenth to give the impression of an attack forthcoming at that point.

And yet, there are *critics* who say that Sheridan's raid was without military value!

On the fifteenth Hoke's division of Beauregard's forces

<sup>8</sup> From Swift Creek, early on June 14th, I telegraphed to General Bragg: "Movement of Grant's across Chickahominy and increase of Butler's force render my position here critical. With my present forces I cannot answer for consequences. Cannot my troops sent to General Lee be returned at once . . ." No answer came. Late in the evening of the same day, having further reason to believe that one corps at least of General Grant's army was already within Butler's lines, I telegraphed to General Lee: "A deserter from the enemy reports that Butler had been reinforced by the Eighteenth and a part of the Tenth Army Corps." To this dispatch, likewise, there came no response. But, as prompt and energetic action became more and more imperative, and as I could no longer doubt the presence of Smith's corps with Butler's forces, I sent one of my aides, Colonel Samuel B. Paul, to General Lee with instructions to explain to him the exact situation. General Lee's answer to Colonel Paul was not encouraging. He said that I must be in error in believing the enemy had thrown a large force on the south side of the James; that the troops referred to by me could be but a few of Smith's corps going back to Butler's lines. Strange to say, at the very time General Lee was thus expressing himself to Colonel Paul, the whole of Smith's corps was actually assaulting the Petersburg lines. But General Lee finally said that he had already issued orders for the return of Hoke's division; that he would do all he could to aid me, and even come himself should the necessity arise.—Beauregard, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

came back to him from the Army of Virginia, and on the morning of the sixteenth, as we have seen, Beauregard withdrew the Bermuda Hundred troops to Petersburg. With these small forces he resisted all of Meade's onslaughts, because, as he says, Meade had not the wit to extend his line and outflank him. There were less than twenty thousand men in the defenses. Meade had five times that number. By extending his left flank he could have passed around the defenders or compelled them to spread out so thin that they could not have exerted a heavy enough fire to stop his attacks. General Fuller believes that Meade's clumsiness when in sole command at Petersburg is an indication that he was probably responsible for clumsy attacks made north of the James River that have been "offloaded on to Grant."

General Beauregard played a heroic part in the defense, which was successful because of the feebleness of the general picked by Grant to oppose him. Bowen had fought as bravely at Port Gibson, to fall before McClernand whom Grant later removed. If Grant ever mused over this contrast, he never mentioned it.

Unsuccessful as were the attacks made on Petersburg by Gillmore, Smith, and Meade, Grant's manœuver across the James River and up to the defenses was a triumph of the military art. To its success the Confederate General Alexander attributed the loss of the war.

Thus the last, and perhaps the best, chances of Confederate success were not lost in the repulse at Gettysburg, nor in any combat of arms. They were lost during three days of lying in camp, believing that Grant was hemmed in by the broad part of the James below City Point, and had nowhere to go but to come and attack us.

Here at last, literally driven into the location in front of Petersburg, Grant found himself in a position of rare strategic advantage; certain to give him possession of Richmond when properly utilized. Indeed, it seems strange that it had not been realized in 1862, that the position astraddle both rivers at the junction of the James and Appomattox was the key to Richmond. For it would force Lee to

hold an exterior line of such enormous length—from the Chickahominy River to the south of Petersburg, nearly 30 miles—that it could not be long maintained.<sup>9</sup>

When he wrote these words, General Alexander, of course, had no means of knowing that Grant had planned the move the previous May.

And General Ewell said that he knew the Confederate cause was lost when Grant got across the James River.

Lincoln had been mystified by the course the campaign was taking, but when, on June 14, 1864, after making arrangements for the Army of the Potomac to cross the James River, Grant sent a despatch to Washington:

Our forces will commence crossing the James today. The enemy show no signs of yet having brought troops to the south side of Richmond. I will have Petersburg secured, if possible, before they get there in much force.<sup>10</sup>

the President replied: "I have just received your despatch of one P. M. yesterday. I begin to see it. You will succeed. God bless you all."<sup>11</sup>

In the forty-two days from May 4 to June 15, 1864, from Culpeper to City Point, Lee had tried to smash Grant in the Wilderness, and failed. Grant had tried to smash Lee at Spottsylvania, and failed. Grant had sent expeditions of ample size to surprise and seize Petersburg, certainly, and probably Richmond, and his column-commanders had let him down. He now had Lee's army besieged in its fortress—the beginning of the end at the north end of the wall that covered the Confederacy.

At the commencement of the campaign Grant told Meade in general terms what he wanted done and tried to leave the execution entirely in his hands, but as early as the Wilderness he found it necessary to give detailed orders for the movement of corps and even of divisions. He only

<sup>9</sup> E. P. Alexander, *Military Memoirs of a Confederate*, p. 61.

<sup>10</sup> Badeau, *op. cit.*, II, 352.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

did this when he found Meade's mind so much slower than his own in meeting the crises of battle. The transmission of orders to the Army of the Potomac and their execution he left in Meade's hands. After crossing the James River he turned the Army of the Potomac over to Meade and commanded that army and the Army of the James through their army-commanders.

Failure of execution prevented the Wilderness, the march to Spottsylvania, the Battle of Spottsylvania, and the surprise of Petersburg from being decisive victories.

We have seen that with Meade's failure to carry Petersburg and Wright's failure to storm the lines of Bermuda Hundred, the great manœuvre to cut Lee off from the south and west had come to an end through the timidity and ineptness of the generals to whom the concluding phases of the manœuvre were entrusted. Instead of being shut up in Richmond with only one avenue of escape—and that threatened by Hunter and Sheridan—Lee was snugly ensconced in the vast bastion of Richmond-Petersburg, one of the strongest positions ever held by an army on the American continent.

June 15,  
1864  
June 17,  
1864

June,  
1864

In the center were Beauregard's intrenchments <sup>12</sup> between the James and the Appomattox, now greatly strengthened and unassailable when held in strength. North and south of them ran the two unfordable rivers to the cities of Richmond and Petersburg, respectively, which in turn were strongly fortified. The Chickahominy Swamp covered the northern face of Richmond; an unmapped wilderness of forest and marsh, the south side of Petersburg. The cities furnished storage, hospitals, water, and barracks for Lee's large and efficient army. When necessary, the entire male population could and did occupy the forts, reinforcing the regular troops or freeing them for operations outside the defenses. All slaves, women and children, contributed to the administration and supply service, work which in Grant's

<sup>12</sup> A detailed description of them can be found in Badeau's *Military History of U. S. Grant*, II, 374-75.

army had to be performed by soldiers taken away from combat. A paved pike and a railroad running along the ridge west of the rivers facilitated the movements of troops. Three railroads and the James River Canal gave ample communication with the south and west, while the Virginia Central Railroad, considerably crippled by Grant's demolitions, still served as an additional connection with the Shenandoah Valley.

The works were too extensive to be surrounded; engineering approaches, the certain methods of siege-warfare, could not serve because additional ditches and parapets could be constructed in rear of the threatened portions of the lines infinitely faster than saps could be pushed against them. There remained three other ways of attack—the cutting of the lines of supply, the rupture of the fortifications by surprise, and the turning of the defenses by a sudden march. Grant was to try them all.

Grant's army, of course, was in the open and was separated by two rivers. Shelter, hospitals, storage, water supply, and roads had to be improvised.

For the siege of Petersburg and Richmond, Grant, in World War parlance, commanded an army-group consisting of Butler's army in the "bottle," with a bridge-head across the James, and Meade's army, extended from City Point to the Jerusalem Plank Road, two miles distant from the Weldon railroad, and from it four miles more to the South Side railroad.

June 22,  
1864 After the troops were rested and restored to their proper commands, Meade ordered Wright and Birney, temporarily commanding the Second Corps, to take the Weldon railroad and to send Wilson's cavalry, reinforced by Kautz's division, from the Army of the James to cut the South Side and Danville railroads. No word had yet been heard from Sheridan and Hunter.

June 22,  
1864 Wilson marched out and brilliantly executed his mission, covering one hundred and sixty miles in five days, breaking the South Side railroad for thirty miles east of Burkes-

ville and the Danville railroad from that point to the Staunton River, and returning to his rendezvous with the infantry at the Weldon Road. Sheridan had cut the Virginia Central Railroad at Trevilian Station a few days before, so Richmond was without supplies and was filled with fugitives joining the army in eating the stores on hand.

June 12,  
1864

The infantry, however, failed woefully in its simpler effort. A gap opened between the Sixth Corps and the Second Corps moving to the left. Under the conditions of the march this was difficult to prevent and would not have been serious if the unoccupied space had been properly patrolled and contact preserved between the two corps, for then any intervening body of the enemy would have been caught as between nut-crackers. But the gap was not patrolled; contact was not preserved.

June 22,  
1864

The Confederate General Hill left his camps with only two divisions to oppose the Union infantry. He contained the whole Sixth Corps with one division. He passed between the two Union army-corps with the other division and struck Barlow's, Mott's, and Gibbon's divisions, one by one, from the rear, routing them and capturing men, guns, and flags—a brilliant feat of arms which completely defeated the move of the Army of the Potomac to reach the Weldon railroad.

June 22,  
1864

During this action Wright lost his self-possession and Meade was unable to control him. At the end of the day Meade was constrained to ask Grant to come to the scene of the battle.

June 23,  
1864

When Wilson's tired but exultant raiders returned to the Weldon railroad, followed by W. H. Lee's cavalry, they found waiting for them, not the Army of the Potomac, but a trap composed of two infantry brigades from the Army of Virginia, and Hampton's cavalry, which had returned from its encounters with Sheridan. Surprised, outnumbered, almost surrounded, most of this force escaped and rejoined the army, after destroying its train. Kautz's artillery was lost.

June 29,  
1864

July 2,  
1864

The futility of the Army of the Potomac in the attempt

to storm Petersburg and in this move against the railroads under Meade's supervision is sufficient answer to all suggestions that Grant should not personally have conducted the overland campaign. When pressure of other matters compelled him to entrust movements to any of his subordinates except Sheridan, they invariably miscarried.

Further operations had to be discontinued owing to the panic caused in Washington by Early's raid, which will be described in the next chapter. To allay the alarm, Grant sent there, first, Rickett's division of the Sixth Corps, then Wright with the other two divisions and finally the Nineteenth Corps arriving from New Orleans.

After Early's retreat, Wright was retained in the North in spite of the wishes of the supposed "commander-in-chief," and Grant, as always, proceeded with his duty with the means at hand. It was under identical circumstances that McClellan stopped his campaign in 1862. Of all Grant's great qualities, his greatest was nobility of character. No action of his superiors or of his subordinates ever turned him from his duty.

At this time, when he had Lee shut up in Richmond-Petersburg, as once before when he had Pemberton invested in Vicksburg, it would appear from Rawlins' lugubrious pen that Grant relaxed from his habits of total abstinence. Said Rawlins:

July 28,  
1864

I find the General in my absence digressed from his true path. The God of Heaven only knows how long I am to serve my country as the guardian of the habits of him whom it has honored. It shall not be always thus. Owing to this faltering of his, I shall not be able to leave here till the rebel movement in Maryland is settled and also the fate of Atlanta. . . .

Matters are now [this was later in the same day] such that it is impossible for me to leave here at present. Active operations have commenced, which with the fact of the General's forgetting himself, in that one danger of which I wrote you this morning, renders my being here of an importance that you can appreciate as fully



as any person living, & though it deprives you of an immediate visit from me, a visit which my health demands.<sup>13</sup>

The only other reference I find to his alleged departure from the dictates of prohibition is a fanciful account in *Butler's Book*. Upon the testimony of a fanatical dry and a fanatical abolitionist much dependence cannot be placed.

The main force of Lee's army being in the Petersburg defenses, Grant sent Hancock with his corps of infantry and Sheridan's cavalry, which had rejoined the army, past the rear of the Army of the James, across the James River, to debouch from the bridge-head on the north bank as the first manœuvre of a double attack from the right and left. The infantry was placed to cover the line of retreat of the cavalry, which was to destroy the railroads running east and northeast from Richmond and, if it found the intrenchments of Richmond unmanned, to "ride boldly up to them" and take the city by escalade, a manœuvre perhaps suggested by Grant's experiences at Contreras<sup>14</sup> and Molino del Rey.

July 26,  
1864

In the latter event, Hancock was to follow Sheridan into Richmond, and other troops would be sent to exploit the success. Lee, however, detected the movement in time and was able to reinforce his left flank by use of his great tactical advantage, the Richmond-Petersburg railroad. Hancock did not order an attack on the defenses, and the cavalry contented itself with demolitions, during the progress of which it was attacked by Wade Hampton. Sheridan was hard pressed until he executed one of the tactical manœuvres of which he was becoming master and won a success in action which again signalized him as the only successful combat corps-commander in the Army of the Potomac.

July 27,  
1864

The bulk of Lee's army having been manœvered from Petersburg into Richmond, Sheridan was recalled to take part in the alternate operation. The time was propitious to

July 29,  
1864

<sup>13</sup> J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> See p. 13.

fire a mine that had been run under the defenses of Petersburg.

June 25,  
1864 Late in June Colonel Henry Pleasants of the Pennsylvania troops, himself an experienced mining engineer, had suggested the project to General Potter, who approved it and passed it on to General Burnside, who in turn recommended it to General Meade.

This officer, with that impatience of suggestions from civilians that characterizes mediocre professional soldiers, rejected the proposal, saying that no army had even dug a military mine of such length. Grant had not been successful with the mines at Vicksburg, but he would not allow Meade to reject a plan proposed to break the trench barrier and directed him to allow the project to be undertaken.

Forced to consent to the undertaking, General Meade refused to furnish any equipment from the army stores even to the use of a theodolite, unemployed at his headquarters, to direct the course of the galleries, and reduced the quantity of powder to be used to eight thousand pounds from the fourteen thousand pounds asked for.

July 23,  
1864 In spite of this lack of coöperation, the mine was successfully excavated. It was 510 feet long from its entrance to the enemy trenches and extended laterally under them for 75 feet.<sup>15</sup>

General Burnside believed that his white troops had been fighting in trenches so long that they had become unsuited to attack across the open. Expecting to use his (Ferrero's) colored division for the spear-head of the attack, he drilled them in a manœuvre, similar to that used by the French in capturing Rome in 1859, to enter the Confederate lines at the opening made by the mine; then sweeping right and left, they were to enlarge the gap in the defense while the white troops following them should advance and take possession of a crest behind the Confederate lines. On the day before the attack was to be delivered, General Meade disap-

<sup>15</sup> The main gallery was 510 $\frac{1}{10}$  feet in length. The left lateral gallery was 37 feet in length and the right lateral gallery 38 feet.

proved the plan and ordered that white troops should be employed, and that after passing through the opening they should advance directly to the crest without clearing the defenders from their flanks. He also issued orders for the coöperation of the other corps and for strong artillery support.

General Burnside and his entire command considered the mine their own particular project, brought to the moment of fruition in spite of General Meade. General Burnside believed that his carefully designed plan was correct and General Meade's wrong, and demanded that both plans be referred to General Grant. General Grant, busy directing the move on Richmond heard the two plans presented by General Meade alone, according to military usage, and backed up his army-commander as he always did except when Meade was in controversy with General Sheridan, in which contingency he invariably sided with the latter.

July 29  
1864

General Burnside and his commanders received the decision in bitterness and despair. Anticipating defeat, the command of the attack, as an unavoidable misfortune, was determined by lot, which fell upon General Ledlie. The orders as to formation of troops and preparation of the ground, so thoroughly distrusted, were imperfectly obeyed.

After the assaulting troops were formed, the first fuse went out, followed by an agonizing delay when no explosion followed, and the mine was not sprung until a further loss of morale had resulted. The ensuing explosion exceeded anything that either friend or foe had anticipated (for the Confederates had heard the working parties). Not only were the troops over the mine destroyed, but those on each side for some distance were driven back. Damage was done on the Union side by falling débris, and the dispirited soldiers chosen for the "forlorn hope" were further unnerved by the unexpected violence of the upheaval. They advanced into the crater and found its sides high and steep, hard to climb, and, for the time, a protection from fire. There most of them stayed till the end. Some of Potter's division

July 30,  
1864

on the right and Wilcox's on the left occupied the adjoining trenches; others sought the fancied protection of the crater.

Meade from the rear, out of sight of the action, ordered more troops into the holocaust. Ferrero's colored division advanced into the press; a part charged past the crater up to the crest behind, only to be driven back in confusion into the crater. Ord's corps were added to the mass.

July 30,  
1864

Grant had arrived from City Point, where he had observed Hancock's expedition to Deep Run, and was with Meade at the opening of the battle. As soon as reports of failure reached him, he rode to the front and, leaving his horse with an orderly, passed out of the fortifications and along them to the bastion where Burnside was observing the action. Grant was the only officer above the rank of division-commander to expose himself. Two of this rank, Ledlie and Ferrero, remained in a dugout throughout the fight. Upon the former's failure to lead his troops much blame for the failure has been attributed, and he resigned his commission under fire. In charity to his memory it may be said that during the great trench war of 1914-1918 fortified command-posts became the almost universal battle positions for such generals as commanded within range of the enemy's guns.<sup>16</sup> It may also be added that efforts to break the enemy's line in the World War did not bring victory in any instance on the Western Front, even when attended by great initial success and over wide fronts.

It is not unlikely that even General Grant, the only responsible general to reach a position within the zone of the enemy fire (eloquently described by Horace Porter<sup>17</sup>), underestimated the difficulty of the advance. Certainly the task was not one to be achieved by any run-of-mine general. Grant himself, or Sheridan, or Terry, or Lawlor, or Mower

<sup>16</sup> In the World War also the Canadian army made a successful local attack at Vimy Ridge in exploitation of a mine explosion.

<sup>17</sup> *Campaigning with Grant*, p. 267.

might have won the action at the crater. No other general ever gave evidence that he could have done so.

At the time, Grant blamed Burnside for the failure and turned the command of his corps over to General Parke. In later years he came to the conclusion that Warren's failure to obey orders was responsible for the catastrophe.<sup>18</sup> Badeau does not absolve Hancock from blame:

During the morning both Hancock and Warren were asked by Meade if they could support the movement of Burnside by attacks in their fronts, but both replied in the negative. Nevertheless, many, spectators and participants, believed, at the time and afterwards, that the lines before the Fifth and Second corps might have been easily carried, or, at any rate, that an advance on the right and left would have relieved the struggling mass of men at the centre, huddled together like sheep in a pen, and exposed like a mark to the concentric fire of the enemy. The corps commanders, however, were learned in their art; and not being at the front himself, Meade could hardly do other than accept their judgments.<sup>19</sup>

It would seem that from first to last Meade was the least blameless of the four.

Grant concealed his chagrin at this failure from the army and from the public. Only to his boyhood friend, Jacob Ammen, who was commanding a battle-ship (*Monitor*) on the Atlantic coast, did he unbosom himself:

Several times we had had decisive victories within our grasp, but let them, through accident or fault, slip through our hands. Our movement from Cold Harbor to the south side of the James was made with such celerity that before the enemy got a single regiment across the river our forces had carried the fortifications east of Petersburg. There was nothing, not even a military force, to prevent our walking in and taking possession. The officer charged with this work, for some unaccountable reason, stopped at the works he had captured, and gave the enemy time to get in a garrison and intrench it. On the 30th of July, again, by a feint north of the James, we

<sup>18</sup> See J. R. Young, *Around the World with General Grant*, II, 290.

<sup>19</sup> Badeau, *op. cit.*, II, 484-86.

drew most of the enemy on that side of the river, and whilst he was there (with my troops quietly withdrawing during the night) a mine, judiciously prepared, was exploded, burying a battery and some three hundred of the enemy, and making a breach in his works into which our men marched without opposition. The enemy was completely surprised, and commenced running in all directions. There was nothing to prevent our men from marching directly to the high ground in front of them, to which they had been directed to go. Once there, all the enemy's fortifications would have been taken in reverse, and no stand could have been made. It is clear that without a loss of five hundred men we could have had Petersburg, with all its artillery and many of its garrison. But our troops stopped in the crater made by the explosion. The enemy was given time to rally and reoccupy his line. Then we found, true enough, that we had the wolf by the ears. He was hard to hold and more dangerous to let go. This was so outrageous that I shall have a court of inquiry to sift the matter.<sup>20</sup>

Undaunted by this new calamity, he ordered Meade to move against the Weldon railroad, but he had no sooner issued the order than he heard of Wright's failure to drive Early, rescinded it, and sent Sheridan to the valley. As the Armies of the James and the Potomac were waging trench warfare, and Sheridan was to manœuvre in the open field, he added Torbert's and Wilson's cavalry divisions to the Sixth and Nineteenth Army Corps taken from the Richmond-Petersburg front.

<sup>20</sup> J. G. Wilson, *General Grant*, p. 271.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE VALLEY CAMPAIGN

WE can leave the armies of the Potomac and the James blockading Lee in the fortress and take up the operations of Grant's other armies. Before turning back to Sherman's offensive from Chattanooga, let us see the outcome of Lee's moves against Hunter's raid.

We have seen that Sigel started up the valley on May 4th, intending to meet General Crook marching in from Charlestown, West Virginia, and General Averell from Beverly, and that before meeting with them he had been defeated by an equal force under General Imboden at New Market, had retreated to Cedar Creek, and been relieved by General Hunter.

May 4,  
1864

General Crook was more fortunate. Crossing the mountains, he struck the Tennessee Railroad at Wytheville and, of more consequence, destroyed the bridge over the New River, after which he joined General Averell at Union on May 15th, and, after Sigel's defeat, retreated to Meadow Bluffs.

May 15,  
1864

Hunter, succeeding Sigel, profiting by the absence of Imboden, who had joined Lee, advanced down the valley, and defeated the Confederate General Jones at Piedmont on June 5th. On the eighth he joined Crook and Averell at Staunton. By this time he had become such a menace that Lee, after his victory of Cold Harbor, felt strong enough to send against him the troops that had defeated Sigel and also Ewell's army-corps under the command of Early. His orders to Early were to drive Hunter from Confederate territory and then either to rejoin him at Petersburg or march on Washington, as he thought best. The two forces came face to face at Lynchburg.

June 8,  
1864

Until that moment, Hunter had conducted himself splen-

June 17,  
1864

didly in the face of real responsibility and considerable opposition. Now he broke down completely. He could have retreated down the valley, fighting rear-guard delaying actions, destroying bridges, picking up detachments, and standing at bay when he got back to Sigel's forces. Instead, he fled to Charlestown, West Virginia, the direction he knew the enemy would not follow, exposed Sigel's force to destruction, and opened the road to Washington. He did not get his troops back into the zone of hostilities until August 5, 1864.

Aug. 5,  
1864

Finding that Hunter had opened the door to him, Early adopted the latter alternative in Lee's orders and marched down the valley.

July 9,  
1864

Sigel, who had kept between the enemy and Washington after his own defeat, now acted with great resource. Early tried to destroy his inferior force by a converging attack, but Sigel, marching out from Martinsburg, defeated the flanking force at Leetown and occupied Maryland Heights in rear of Harper's Ferry after destroying the bridges at that point. Unwilling to assault such a strong position and unable to use the Harper's Ferry pass without doing so, Early had to move around by Hagerstown and Frederick to the Monocacy River. Lew Wallace, disgraced since his very questionable mistake at Shiloh, marched out from Baltimore and interposed his inferior force at this point, to meet inevitable defeat and gain the necessary hours to save the capital from assault and possible temporary occupation by the enemy. Of Wallace's fine feat of arms, Grant says in his *Memoirs*:

General Wallace contributed on this occasion, by the defeat of the troops under him, a greater benefit to the cause than often falls to the lot of a commander of an equal force to render by means of a victory.<sup>1</sup>

But Halleck deceived him as to Sigel's conduct, and Grant removed Sigel from command, although he had saved his

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, 197.



army, won a battle over a vastly superior force, and delayed that force five vital days.

It will be remembered from Chapter VIII that when Grant was assigned to command all the armies, those in the vicinity of Washington as well as those west of the Mississippi were tacitly excepted. In Grant's rear and right flank, therefore, were the four military districts—the District of Western Virginia, the District of Susquehanna, the District of the Middle, and the District of Washington. Their troops were theoretically under the commander-in-chief, but with that general at the front, they were sometimes independent and not coördinated, and sometimes they were called hither and thither at the orders of the several military functionaries in the capital.

March 9  
1864

As Early's army approached Washington, there ensued a reign of *opéra bouffe*. Ten thousand soldiers and an army of Government employees were in Washington, quite capable of holding the splendid forts surrounding the city. More soldiers were in Baltimore on Early's left; Sigel and Hunter were in his rear. Only a little determination in the face of the enemy was needed, first, to check him, and then to capture him—but that little was wanting. In response to frantic calls, Grant sent to Washington one division, then the whole Sixth Corps under Wright, and finally the Nineteenth Corps arriving from New Orleans under Emory, but nothing was accomplished except the holding of Washington, which was not seriously menaced.

Dana wrote to Grant:

Nothing can possibly be done here for want of a commander. General Augur commands the defences of Washington, with McCook and a lot of brigadier-generals under him. Wright commands his own corps. General Gillmore has been assigned to the temporary command of those troops of the Nineteenth corps in the city of Washington; General Ord to command the Eighth corps, and all other troops in the Middle Department, leaving Wallace to command the city alone. But there is no head to the whole, and it seems indispensable that you should at once appoint one. Hunter

will be the ranking officer, if he ever gets up, but he will not do; indeed, the Secretary of War directs me to tell you, in his judgment Hunter ought instantly to be relieved, having proven himself far more incapable than even Sigel. He also directs me to say that *advice or suggestions from you will not be sufficient. General Halleck will not give orders except as he receives them.* The President will give none, and till you direct positively and explicitly what is to be done, everything will go on in the deplorable and fatal way in which it has gone on, for the past week.<sup>2</sup>

Grant's reply to Dana was a despatch to Halleck in these words:

Give orders assigning Major-General Wright to supreme command of all troops moving against the enemy, regardless of the rank of other commanders. He should get outside of the trenches with all the force he possibly can, and should push Early to the last moment, supplying himself from the country.<sup>3</sup>

The letter also asked for Lincoln's views, and the President replied:

Your despatch to General Halleck, referring to what I may think in the present emergency, is shown me. . . What I think is, that you should provide to retain your hold where you are, certainly; and bring the rest with you, personally, and make a vigorous effort to defeat the enemy's force in this vicinity. I think there is really a fair chance to do this, if the movement is prompt. That is what I think—upon your suggestion, and is not an order.<sup>4</sup>

And again:

I have seen your despatch expressing your unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bulldog grip and chew and choke as much as possible.<sup>5</sup>

Grant knew that the vital thing was to hold his armies where they were and he dared not leave them.

Slowly Hunter brought his army back to Harper's Ferry.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, II, 442.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 437.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, IX, 428.

Slower yet, Wright, unable to endure the responsibility of independent command, pushed after Early, who had retreated through Snicker's Gap and a short way down the valley.

All during July, Early set the Union armies in the north at defiance, defeating fragments and moving about at will. Lincoln, Stanton, and Halleck would not accept the measures Grant had been suggesting, nor would they take any effective action, individually or collectively. Lincoln would not let Hunter be superseded, though Stanton thought him more incapable than he thought Sigel. Grant could not get the districts of Susquehanna, the Middle, Washington, and West Virginia consolidated.

Grant wanted Wright's corps brought back to go on with the siege of Petersburg, but the authorities were adamant. He accepted their views and said he would rather have the Washington forces advance on Lynchburg than return to him, but they kept the troops and did not advance on Lynchburg or anywhere else.

Grant now addressed a message to the President:

After the late raid into Maryland had expended itself, seeing the necessity of having the four departments of the Susquehanna, the Middle, West Virginia, and Washington under one head, I recommended that they be merged into one, and named General Franklin as a suitable person to command the whole. I still think it highly essential that these four departments should be in one command. I do not insist that the departments should be broken up, nor do I insist upon General Franklin commanding. All that I ask is that one general officer, in whom I and yourself have confidence, should command the whole. . . . During the last raid, the wires happened to be down between here and Fortress Monroe, and the cable broken between there and Cherrystone. This made it take from twelve to twenty-four hours, each way, for despatches to pass. Under such circumstances, it was difficult for me to give orders or directions, because I could not tell how the conditions might change during the transit of despatches.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, II, 453-54.

In reply, the President asked Grant to name a day when he would meet him at Fortress Monroe. But by that time Grant was too vigorously engaged in the battle that culminated in the mine disaster to leave the front, and the moment passed. Shortly after, Lincoln again requested Grant to clear up the northern departments in person, and a new chapter opened.

Attention devoted to the affairs around Washington had detracted from his supervision over the movements under his eye—an interference which may easily have made the difference between failure and success at the mine. That effort concluded, he addressed himself, without taking any rest, to the problem of the Shenandoah. He devised a means “to plow around the situation”<sup>7</sup>—a situation existing because the scene of action embraced four military districts, commanded by generals independent of one another, in which there were operating still other independent commanders of armies—by sending the one general who had not disappointed him to command all the troops in the field, from whatever department they should be drawn.

He explained his plan to Halleck:

Aug. 1,  
1864

I am sending General Sheridan for temporary duty whilst the enemy is being expelled from the border. Unless General Hunter is in the field in person, I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also. Once started up the Valley they ought to be followed until we get possession of the Virginia Central railroad. If General Hunter is in the field, give Sheridan direct command of the Sixth Corps and cavalry division. All the cavalry, I presume, will reach Washington in the course of to-morrow.<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln had exercised an important part in maintaining the military anarchy around Washington, but now he telegraphed Grant:

<sup>7</sup> Lincoln's expression.

<sup>8</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 205-6.

I have seen your despatch in which you say, "I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also." This, I think, is exactly right, as to how our forces should move. But please look over the despatches you may have received from here, even since you made that order, and discover, if you can, that there is any idea in the head of any one here, of "putting our army *south* of the enemy," or of "following him to the *death*" in any direction. I repeat to you it will neither be done nor attempted unless you watch it every day and hour, and force it.<sup>9</sup>

Aug. 3,  
1864

This letter brought Grant by boat and train direct to Monocacy, where General Hunter maintained his headquarters among his scattered troops. The enemy were raiding the country at will, but he did not know their whereabouts. Grant told him that the way to find the enemy was to advance, and himself gave the orders to Hunter's troops to move immediately on Halltown by rail and by road. He then told Hunter to make his headquarters in the rear and give command of the troops to Sheridan, whereupon Hunter asked to be relieved, and passed out of the war.

On the tenth of August, less than a week after assuming command, Sheridan marched against Early, who retired to a strong position at Fisher's Hill. While in front of this place, Sheridan heard from Grant that two Confederate divisions had left Richmond to oppose him and that he was to act on the defensive. He started back the next day and after some skirmishing reached Halltown on the twentieth.

Aug. 10,  
1864

Aug. 20,  
1864

Around this position he and Early skirmished for a month, Sheridan getting the best of the fighting and Early holding most of the country. The time was well spent by Sheridan learning to know his men and the country over which he was to operate and in organizing a secret-service system. At the end of that time, when Grant came to see him to start him on the offensive, Sheridan was ready to

Sept. 17,  
1864

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

go and submitted plans for attack which his chief was glad to approve.

Early assumed correctly that Grant had visited Sheridan to order an advance, and instantly ordered Ramseur's corps, raiding Cumberland, and Anderson's division, raiding the valley of Bull Run, to close on the center, intrenched in front of Winchester.

Sept. 19.  
1864 Sheridan's position was now between Opequan Creek and Berryville. In the attempt to overwhelm the troops in front of him, he moved Wilson's cavalry division and his infantry along the road from Berryville, along Red Bud Run, through a rough, wooded country, leaving Crook's Army of West Virginia in reserve at the Opequan Creek crossing. Torbert was ordered to cross the creek at Steven's and Lock's fords and come in on Early's left by the road from Martinsburg. Sheridan followed his advance guard, which handsomely drove away Jones's division posted at the point where Red Bud Run passes from the rocky hills into the more open country.

At no point along its course does the stream pass through mountains, so we find a special psychological interest in the fact that even years after the event, Sheridan refers to it in his *Memoirs* as "the defile." Defile it appeared to Wright, Emory, and their troops. As is always the case with ordinary men, they found countless obstacles to delay their advance on the enemy. The vital hours were lost. Early's troops were back in their positions before Sheridan was able to attack. The battle developed into a frontal assault in which Sheridan's right flank was severely repulsed, compelling a change in his original plan to defeat Early with the troops in hand and send Crook's division down the valley road past his left flank to cut off Early's retreat, and forcing him to use those troops to reinforce his own right.

In this position Crook's line outflanked Early's left and was protected on its right from Early's flank guard at Stephenson's Depot by Torbert's cavalry tardily coming

on the field. Sheridan now had the advantage of position and numbers. To them he added the magnetism of his extraordinary personality.

Early, for his part, held his lines without flinching until the troops gave way and fled in disorder. The defense was so stubborn that the victorious troops were also in disorder and could not be assembled in time for pursuit. Early, therefore, was able to rally his forces in the strong position at Fisher's Hill, where Sheridan attacked again. This time he was able to carry out his battle plans. Pressing his main force against Early's front and passing Crook's division around the hill and woods covering Early's left flank and attacking him in the rear while his main force attacked in front, he drove Early in complete confusion.

Sept. 22,  
1864

To make the victory complete, Sheridan had sent Torbert with three divisions of cavalry by the Luray valley (south fork of the Shenandoah) to intercept Early's retreat at New Market, but Torbert had not been able to force himself to obey the order with its attendant danger of capture, and fell back on Front Royal. Of this failure Sheridan was very resentful. He also resented General Averell's failure to pursue vigorously, and removed him from command of his division.

Sheridan's attitude as commander was in complete variance with his conduct as a subordinate. Having gloriously defeated Early's invasion of the North, he was now in position to carry out Grant's instructions to operate against Lee's rear with his own army triumphant and the enemy demoralized. But although he had criticized Butler's caution at Bermuda Hundred, he would not accept the risk and remained stubbornly on the safe side of the Blue Ridge until Grant sanctioned a retreat to Winchester and accepted the alternative, the return of the Sixth and Nineteenth corps to operate against the front of the Richmond-Petersburg fort.

In the course of his retreat Sheridan swept the valley of stock and grain to deprive the Confederates of its use.

Seeing this, General Rosser came to the valley with a brigade of Richmond cavalry, and with all of Early's mounted troops he harassed the rear-guard in an effort to prevent its depredations. Sheridan turned his own cavalry upon them at Tom's Creek and won another smashing victory, driving Rosser for fifteen miles in complete disorder.

He was now at variance with Grant as to the point where he was to stop and fortify. Grant wanted him to be far enough south to operate against the railroad at Gordonsville and Charlottesville. Sheridan wished to withdraw to Winchester.

At this juncture, Stanton and Halleck, still oblivious to all considerations except the passive defense of the capital, entered the controversy, sent Sheridan instructions modifying Grant's, and even invited Sheridan to leave his command and come to Washington to confer on the situation. Sheridan accepted.

Unlike Grant, whose military qualities were all subconscious—the qualities of genius—Sheridan's were also conscious. He started for Washington at the head of his cavalry, intending to send them to cut the Virginia Central Railroad at Charlottesville, when his signal-corps decoded the following message from the Confederate tower on Three Top Hill:

TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL EARLY: Be ready to move as soon as my forces join you, and we will crush Sheridan.

LONGSTREET,  
*Lieut.-Gen.*<sup>10</sup>

Sheridan forwarded the message to Halleck, asked if Halleck had any confirmatory information, and questioned whether under the circumstances he ought to leave his command. Halleck sent the following insubordinate reply:

<sup>10</sup> *Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan*, II, 63.

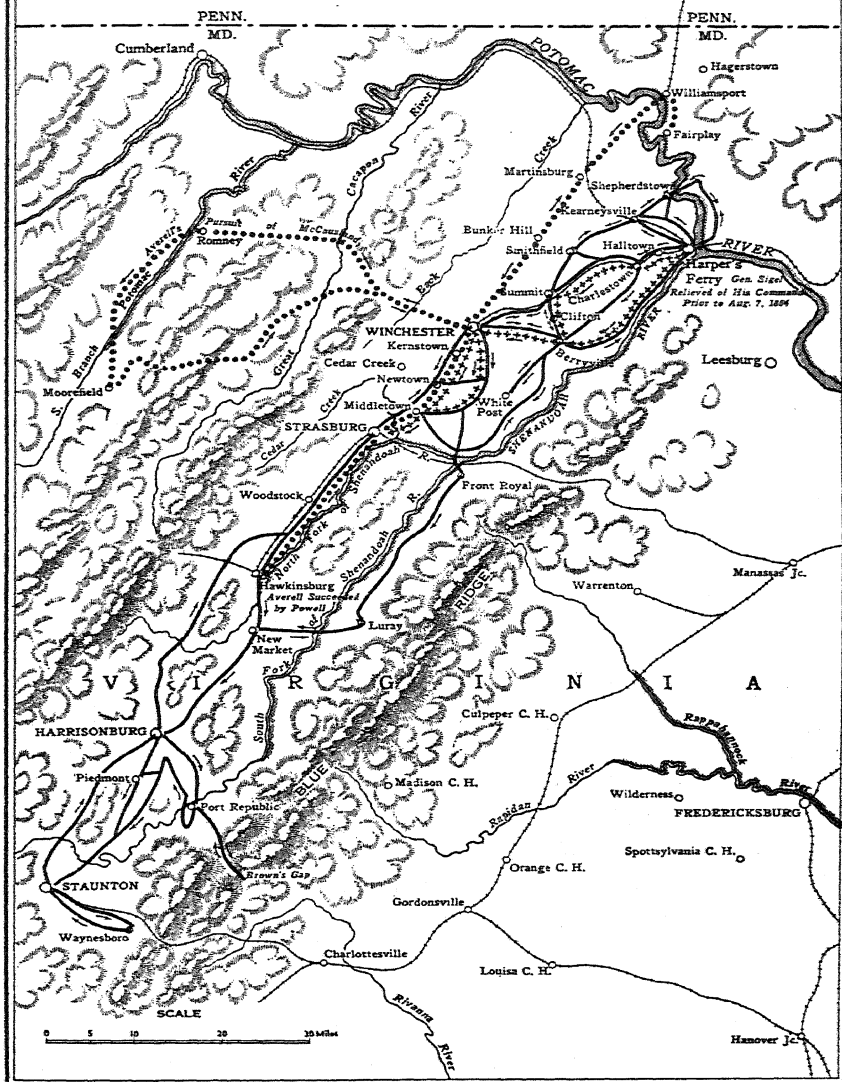


# OPERATIONS OF THE ARMY OF THE SHENANDOAH

MAJ. GEN. P. H. SHERIDAN—COMMANDING

AUG. 7, 1864—NOV. 28, 1864

- Sheridan and Detached Commands
- ..... Averell's Operations
- +++++++ Crook's Operations





HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D. C., OCT. 16, 1864

TO MAJOR-GENERAL SHERIDAN,  
*Rectorstown, Va.:*

General Grant says that Longstreet brought with him no troops from Richmond, but I have very little confidence in the information collected at his headquarters. If you can leave your command with safety, come to Washington, as I wish to give you the views of the authorities here.

H. W. HALLECK,  
*Major-General, Chief of Staff.*<sup>11</sup>

Sheridan then sent the cavalry back to Wright and went on to Washington with a small escort. He also advised Wright to call in Powell's cavalry division and prepare for an attack, which Wright was too inert to do.

At Washington, Halleck and Stanton sanctioned Sheridan's plan and overruled that of the supposed commander-in-chief, and Sheridan took the train back to Martinsburg, where he spent the night. The next day he rode to Winchester and spent another night away from his command.

At dawn the following morning Early outflanked and stampeded the Union army. Crook's division dissolved into a mob of fugitives, and Wright's infantry did not stand up much better. Alone, Getty's division held its formation and acted as a rear-guard. Custer's cavalry was not attacked, remained out of the battle, and joined Getty afterwards.

When the disaster became known to Sheridan, he faced as terrible a prospect as ever confronted a soldier. He had left his army to consult with Stanton and Halleck against the plan of his commander. After returning to Martinsburg, in the full vigor of his young manhood and hard physical condition he could have ridden through to his army that night. He not only failed to do so, but dallied a second night on the road—conduct unexplained, inexplicable, and

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

unpardonable. His army had been disastrously defeated during his absence. Only a complete reversal of the day could save him from irretrievable disgrace.

Fortunately for him, Early's troops became confused in their victory, as troops are prone to do. They also stopped to plunder the Union camp, an act reminiscent of Belmont, Shiloh, Naseby, and many another battle.

How Sheridan availed himself of the delay, how he rallied the troops, how he re-formed his line, how he repelled Early's second attack, attacked in turn, and drove him headlong up the valley has ever since been a favorite theme of song and story. It is the basis of his fame.

Yet, compare this battle with Shiloh. Sheridan was in free command in the Shenandoah Valley; on the Tennessee, Grant was restricted by cramping orders. Sheridan had selected his battle-field; Grant's had been chosen by his predecessor. Sheridan had left his command to consult against his commander; Grant had left his army to bring up Buell's. Sheridan had no excuse for his absence; Grant's absence is thoroughly explained. Wright's surprise came after three years of experience to officers and men; Sherman's, to military novices. Sheridan's soldiers had a free retreat in which to recover their courage; Grant's were terrified by the river cutting off their escape. Sheridan rallied the men who would not stand under their own commanders and won the action; Grant did the same. Sheridan won undying fame for Cedar Creek; Grant has never risen from under the cloud of Shiloh!

Sheridan pursued Early to Staunton once more and then retreated again to Winchester. He spent the winter fighting Mosby's guerrillas and exchanging raids with the enemy. In this he was not successful. Rosser twice cut the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, while Torbert was repulsed in an attack on Gordonsville. Custer was surprised in camp at Cedar Creek and badly defeated. Crook was surprised and captured in his bed by Mosby.

Oct. 20,  
1864

Dec. 19,  
1864

Oct. 17,  
1864

Feb. 21,  
1865

It is apparent that to the virtues of youth, enterprise, dash, energy, and bravery these young generals, including their commander, added the faults more commonly found in that age than in maturity—carelessness and a tendency to sleep late after a late night not free from intemperance.

In summing up the Valley campaign one can find much praise for the Confederate leaders. They were almost always victorious and, from April to September, almost always in possession of the Valley.

Early's raid to Frederick and Washington was the most successful invasion of the North carried out during the war and, but for Grant's unswerving determination, would have brought the Army of the Potomac back from Petersburg, as previous threats to Washington had done. It did hold the Nineteenth, Sixth, and cavalry corps from the siege of Petersburg-Richmond, and it protected the communications of Richmond and Lee's army all year. Early's failures in battle and his irreplaceable losses were due to Sheridan's almost unexampled battle capacity. To a freedom of battle-manceuver this soldier added an extraordinary power of leadership. That Early's dispositions would have proven adequate to the occasions but for the extraordinary force of Sheridan's personality is shown by the way he drove Wright, in command of a victorious army, and was in turn driven by Sheridan coming to the defeated army on the day of its defeat.

Before Sheridan came to the Valley, the Unionists had never routed the Confederates in the East. Sheridan's service, therefore, lay not only in the losses he inflicted upon Early, but in the resounding effect upon public opinion of his tactical victories. Grant's inexorable advance was not understood by the public at that time any better than by many military historians with the value of perspective. Sheridan's successes, of the story-book type, appealed to the imagination and perhaps saved the war by winning the November election.

Strategically, his campaign failed because he refused to carry out Grant's orders to cut Lee's communications. Had he obeyed, he might have been defeated as he feared. If he had succeeded, he would have brought the war to an end in the fall of 1864 and in the vicinity of Appomattox.

## CHAPTER XII

### FROM CHATTANOOGA TO NASHVILLE AND SAVANNAH

WHEN Grant moved east, he had Sherman appointed to command of his old District of the Mississippi, including the Armies of the Ohio, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee, for he both disliked and distrusted Thomas, who was Sherman's senior, and he had sent Burnside, who was senior to both, out of the district.

March 3,  
1864  
March 9,  
1864

Then, as always, Grant entertained the highest affection and regard for Sherman. Up to this time, however, the latter had shown no achievements warranting such preferment. He had not been in Mexico, nor had he experienced any important Indian fighting before he resigned his commission of first-lieutenant in the regular army. Consequently, when he joined the army in 1861, he knew less about war than a law-school graduate knows about law, or a newly graduated doctor about medicine, for West Point is as much a preparatory school as a college, as much an institution of general culture as it is a professional school, and at that time it was not very efficient as a school of war because after a long period of peace that subject was necessarily taught by professors who had little or no personal knowledge of the subject.

Sherman had been in the defeat of Bull Run, driven back by rain at Eastport, unskilful before Shiloh, brave in the battle but not a factor in the victory, repulsed at Haines's Bluff, a quarreler on the Mississippi, an opponent of the Vicksburg campaign, in which he accomplished nothing, a failure in his own campaign against Johnston, and, although energetic in his march to Chattanooga, had been beaten in his assault on Missionary Ridge. An independent campaign against Johnston at Meridian ended with the defeat of his

July 21,  
1861

April 29,  
1863

Sept. 22,  
1863  
Nov. 24,  
1863

Feb.,  
1864

cavalry under General Sooy Smith and a retreat to Vicksburg.

His early efforts to pose as a military expert had brought him a reputation of insanity, and a further effort to assert "professional rights" over McClelland's alleged "political interest" through his own political pull—his brother, John Sherman—had failed.

Thereafter he was content to be Grant's Man Friday—it is not too much to say his Great Man Friday. If he lacked the genius of Davout, the brilliance of Lannes, and was jealous of merit in others, he betrayed none of the vileness of Bernadotte and Murat. He was constitutionally brave on the battle-field, intelligent, industrious, and obedient to his chief, from whom he was not slow to learn much of the art of war and whom he had aided, among other ways, by supplying to his entourage the character of swashbuckler, which many soldiers and civilians consider indispensable to soldierhood.

Jan.—  
July,  
1863  
Nov.,  
1863  
Feb.,  
1864

Administration came naturally to him. From Grant in the Vicksburg campaign he learned how to march without a base. In this march to Chattanooga and in the Meridian campaign he perfected himself in the qualities of administration so indispensable to the work ahead.

The conduct of an attack, the record clearly shows, was beyond his capacity to absorb, even from its greatest master, yet intellect so far triumphed over instinct that he was able to force himself and his army forward against Johnston in a kind of defensive-offensive without danger to either side, very much as Halleck had advanced on Corinth. There was this difference in object, however: Halleck only wanted to occupy a railroad center; Sherman was consciously devastating a countryside.

Feb. 9,  
1864

General Schofield had been brought from command of the Department of the Missouri to command the Department and Army of the Ohio of one army-corps. General McPherson succeeded to the command of the Army of the Tennessee of four army-corps. General Thomas retained

March,  
1864



command of the Army of the Cumberland of three army-corps. Sherman "allowed" General Granger to return home on leave without consulting his army-commander, General Thomas, and replaced him with General Howard. General Joseph Hooker, the other principal in the catastrophe of Chancellorsville, commanded another corps in the same army.

March,  
1864

May 2,  
1863

Granger, it will be remembered, had made an imperishable name by marching without orders to Thomas' assistance at the Battle of Chickamauga. At the Battle of Chattanooga it was his corps that won the day after both Sherman and Hooker had done less than had been confided to them. During the period of waiting before the assault, after Missionary Ridge was stormed, and on the march to relieve Burnside he had incurred Grant's displeasure and had subsequently quarreled with Sherman.

Sept.  
19-20,  
1863  
Nov.  
23-25,  
1863

The incident was a development of natural rivalry and temperamental antipathy, common in all walks of life, from which the Confederacy suffered more than the Union. It was unfortunate in this instance, for it took from the western armies the fourth of the five natural fighters they had produced. McClelland having been relieved at Vicksburg and Sheridan having gone East to command the eastern cavalry. Grant, of course, was the first and greatest. What happened to the fifth will be related in its proper place. At the very end, too late to be of value, a sixth fighter appeared.

June 18,  
1863

At the outset, Sherman's problem appeared easy. Banks' army was to march north from Mobile. Two armies, Schofield's and Thomas', were to confront Bragg's army (now commanded by General J. E. Johnston at Dalton) less Longstreet's corps, which had played such important parts in the battles of Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Knoxville and which had been called back to Virginia when Grant appeared there in person. Finally, McPherson with the Army of the Tennessee, as strong as Johnston's army, was to march from Decatur to the Confederate left flank and rear.

Halleck, however, had so far committed Banks' army to the Red River campaign west of the Mississippi as to prevent this irresistible combination. Sherman or McPherson had added to this difficulty by delaying the furlough of the men of Blair's corps so long that they did not get back to the army until the third week of the campaign. In consequence, Sherman abandoned his first plan for a wide turning movement by the Army of the Tennessee from the Tennessee River at Decatur and concentrated the three armies near Chattanooga.

May 6,  
1864

General Johnston was intrenched behind artificial inundations at Buzzard's Roost just south of Tunnel Hill. He had spared no ingenuity in fortifying this position, but was guilty of two pieces of unparalleled carelessness. The tunnel, which during the past winter could have been so wrecked as to take months to reopen, was not disturbed,<sup>1</sup> and Snake Creek Gap, a pass through the mountains leading to his left rear, was not watched, although, since it ran through friendly territory, a troop of cavalry could have furnished this service.

May 5,  
1864  
May 7,  
1864

Sherman moved his headquarters from Chattanooga to Ringgold on May 5th, and on the seventh, after the Battle of the Wilderness was over, he brought Schofield's and Thomas' armies in contact with Johnston, intrenched before Dalton. Two days later McPherson, coming from Chattanooga, had passed through Snake Creek Gap, confronted the fortifications at Resaca, thought them too strong for attack, retreated, and intrenched at the outlet of the gap. There Sherman joined him on the eleventh with all of his armies except Howard's corps, which followed Johnston retreating from Dalton.

May 11,  
1864

A great deal of difference of opinion has been expressed as to what ought to have happened and what did happen. Sherman believed that McPherson could have taken a position across Johnston's rear and compelled the surrender of

<sup>1</sup> The military textbooks of the day did not contemplate the use, and consequently the destruction, of railroads.

# ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

UNDER COMMAND OF  
MAJ. GEN. W. T. SHERMAN

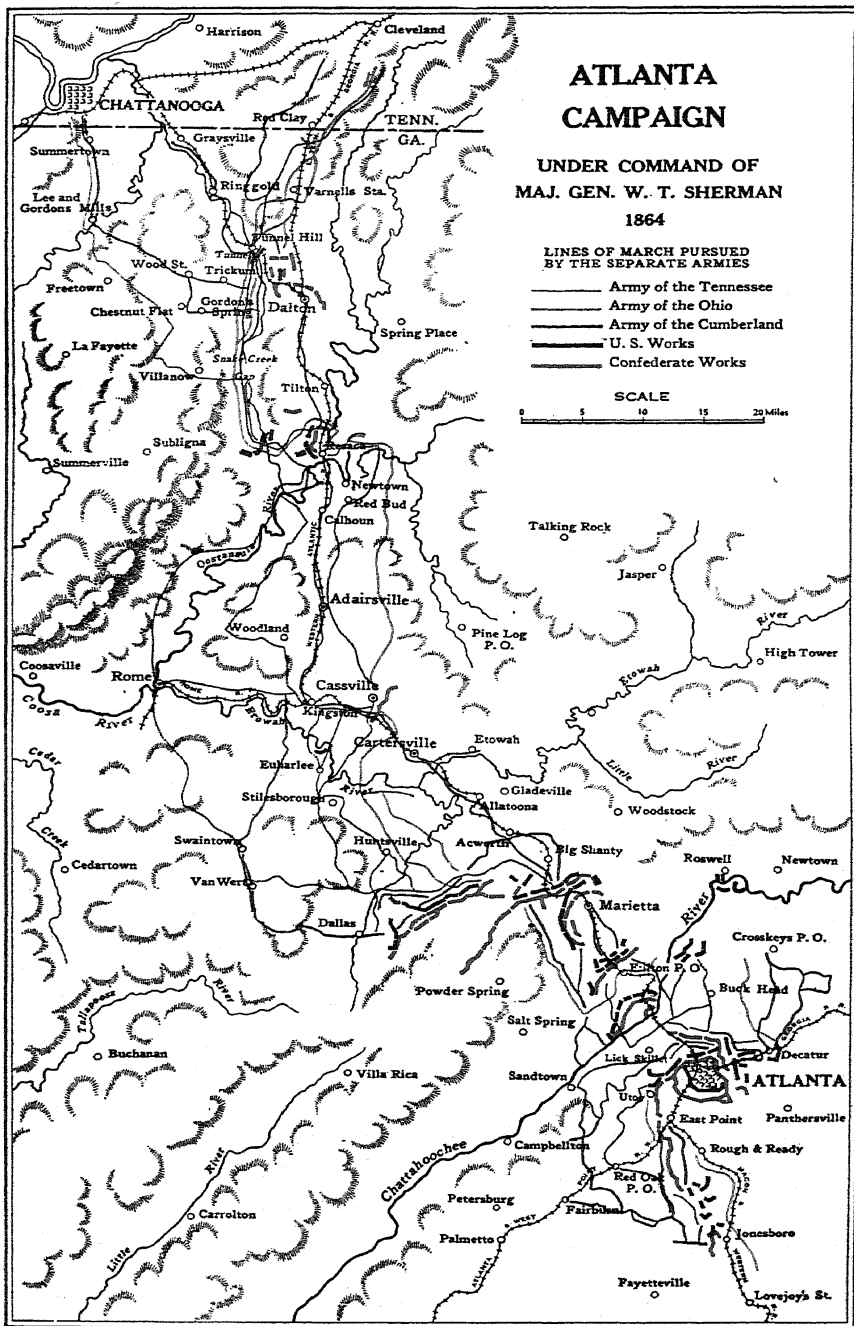
1864

Lines of March Pursued  
by the Separate Armies

- Army of the Tennessee
- Army of the Ohio
- Army of the Cumberland
- U. S. Works
- Confederate Works

SCALE

0 5 10 15 20 miles





at least half of his army. General Schofield and the Confederate General Cleburne believed that Sherman should have rushed troops to McPherson to make this possible, and that for McPherson to attempt the feat without reinforcements would have invited disaster, as McPherson believed. Johnston thought he had the situation well in hand at all times and did not have to retreat until Sherman's larger army started through Snake Creek Gap.

Thomas may be held to agree with Schofield, Cleburne, and McPherson because in making the original suggestion to move through Snake Creek Gap he proposed that the mission be assigned to his own army, which was twice as large as McPherson's. Sherman overruled Thomas because he wanted to keep the bulk of his army together. He thought that McPherson's pressure on Johnston's line of retreat would compel the latter to fall back and that he could strike him during the movement. His plan failed.

Without venturing to judge between such eminent disputants, one cannot fail to remark that the armies of the West had failed to win such a decisive victory as they had been accustomed to under Grant, just as Grant had failed to win such battles in the East without them.

Sherman did not attack when he arrived at Resaca with his whole army. Instead, he fortified his own lines and slowly extended them until, his numbers being much larger, he was able to lengthen them to an extent beyond which Johnston dared not stretch his own, and the latter fell back.

May 15,  
1864

Behind Kingston, Johnston started an offensive against Sherman's column entering that city, but, owing to a misunderstanding with General Hood, he abandoned it and retreated to a fortified line at Cassville. Here another misunderstanding arose between Johnston on one hand and Hood and Polk on the other, resulting in another retirement, this time to the first of the Kenesaw Mountain positions running from Dallas to Brush Mount. Sherman followed and arrived in front of him on May 25th.

May 20,  
1864

In this vicinity Johnston and Sherman skirmished and

May 25,  
1864

June 27,  
1864

manœuvered for thirty days. There was one battle, when Sherman, fearing that he could not extend his lines any farther in his efforts to outflank the enemy, and learning that Grant, after his tremendous "overland campaign," had finally penned Lee in Petersburg, assaulted the lines. The attack was not delivered in heavy force and was easily repulsed.

General Cox's descriptions of these attacks are the most penetrating and detailed descriptions of battle tactics of the Civil War that have come to my attention. He says in part

The evidence which the assaults by both armies near New Hope Church gave of the tactical weakness of narrow and deep columns of attack against such fortifications in such a country, is greatly strengthened by the experience in front of Marietta. . . . The attack of Hooker at New Hope Church, and that of Howard at Pickett's Mill, were both made in column of brigades or demi-brigades. The result in both cases demonstrated that in a difficult and wooded country, and especially against intrenched lines, the column had little, if any, advantage over a single line of equal front. It could not charge with the ensemble which could give it momentum, and its depth was therefore a disadvantage, since it exposed masses of men to fire who were wholly unable to fire in return. . . .

Our books of tactics, copying from the French, had taught that *the regimental column of divisions of two companies "doubled on the centre," was par excellence the column of attack.* In spite of the fact that Wellington in the Peninsular war had shown again and again that such a column, even over open country, melted away before the "thin red line" of British soldiers armed only with the old "Brown Bess" with its buck-and-ball cartridge, the *prestige of Napoleonic tradition kept the upper hand.* We made our attacks in this instance (*excepting Logan's*) in a formation which did not give front enough to have any appreciable effect in subduing the enemy's fire; which by its depth offered the greatest possible mark to a concentric and flanking fire of the enemy; and which the obstructions in its way deprived of all the impetus to pierce an opposing line, which is the only merit of such a column. So hard it is

to free ourselves from the trammels of old customs and a mistaken practice!<sup>2</sup>

Sherman was contemplating a turning movement somewhat bolder than his previous efforts when Johnston withdrew again, putting his flanks behind the Chattahoochee River and posting his center in a bridge-head on the northern bank. This formation would facilitate an attack on either of Sherman's flanks if he crossed the river and again undertook his tactics of spreading his wings farther than Johnston could follow.

July 3,  
1864

But once more Johnston found it necessary to withdraw before Sherman felt strong enough to attack. Without manœuvering from this position, he withdrew again in rear of Peach Tree Creek, where he claims he planned to assume the offensive. How this rivalry of caution between Johnston and Sherman might have turned out, no one can tell, for the stately military waltz that had covered sixty miles in seventy-three days was at an end and the issue was taken out of their hands.

July 9,  
1864

Jefferson Davis thought that Johnston was about to be besieged in Atlanta. With Lee besieged in Richmond, this would be equivalent to the loss of the war. Lee's powers of offense were clearly exhausted. He had tried attack in the Wilderness and had failed to shake Grant, newly in command of a strange army. He had refused Beauregard's desperate suggestion that he attack Meade's left flank after repulsing him from the defenses of Petersburg. Early's march on Washington had failed to move Grant from his investment, and Early was now in retreat. The only chance for the Confederacy lay in the defeat of Sherman. This, Davis thought, Johnston would not undertake. He therefore turned the forlorn hope over to Hood, relieving Johnston. In reply, Johnston wrote:

July 17,  
1864

Your despatch of yesterday received and obeyed. Command of the army and Department of Tennessee has been transferred to

July 18,  
1864

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Andrew A. Humphreys, *The Army in the Civil War*, IX, 80, 129. *Italics mine.*

General Hood. As to the alleged cause of my removal, I assert that Sherman's army is much stronger, compared with that of Tennessee, than Grant's, compared with that of Northern Virginia. Yet the enemy has been compelled to advance much more slowly to the vicinity of Atlanta than to that of Richmond and Petersburg; and penetrated much deeper into Virginia than Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

He might have added that he had defended a country almost devoid of natural defenses, that the railroad which determined the line of the campaign ran almost along the height of land between the Atlantic and Gulf slopes, only crossing some insignificant streams near their *sources* and two small spurs of the Smoky Mountains. Grant, after breaking through the Wilderness, had to cross a series of rivers near their *mouaths*.

Before turning to Hood's desperate campaign, let us appraise Sherman's achievement while he held the initiative. His instructions from Grant read in part as follows:

April 4,  
1864

You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources. . . .

April 19,  
1864

What I now want more particularly to say is, that if the two main attacks, yours and the one from here, should promise great success, the enemy may, in a fit of desperation, abandon one part of their line of defense, and throw their whole strength upon the other, believing a single defeat without any victory to sustain them better than a defeat all along their line, and hoping too, at the same time, that the army, meeting with no resistance, will rest perfectly satisfied with their laurels, having penetrated to a given point south, thereby enabling them to throw their force first upon one and then on the other.

With the majority of military commanders they might do this.

But you have had too much experience in traveling light, and subsisting upon the country, to be caught by any such ruse. I hope my experience has not been thrown away. My directions, then, would be, if the enemy in your front show signs of joining Lee,

<sup>3</sup> Johnston to Cooper, July 18, 1864. Quoted from Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, II, 461.



follow him up to the full extent of your ability. I will prevent the concentration of Lee upon your front, if it is in the power of this army to do it.<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious that Sherman had totally failed in carrying out his mission to break up Johnston's army and that he had made only two rather feeble efforts to do so—his unsuccessful turning movement at Resaca and his mild attack at Kenesaw Mountain. On the other hand, he had penetrated sixty miles into enemy country from his line of departure, had indulged his specialty—war against the enemy resources—and, beyond preventing troops leaving his front to fight Grant, had attracted to himself some thousands of Georgia militia. If his efforts had not been crowned with success, they stood out in marked contrast to the efforts of Sigel, Hunter, Butler, Gillmore, Smith, and Meade, put forth under the eye of the master or in his vicinity.

Sheridan's great responsibilities had not begun.

Sherman heard of Hood's appointment to succeed Johnston almost as soon as it was made. He explains in his *Memoirs*—and so do all writers of this campaign—that he thought a change of leaders indicated a change in policy, and that the enemy would turn from a passive defense to a vigorous offense. The reasoning was borne out by McPherson's estimate of Hood, with whom he had been a West Point classmate.

July 18,  
1864

It seems more likely that this was an afterthought, for Sherman approached Atlanta with his wings separated far beyond supporting distance, while Thomas began to cross Peach Tree Creek in the presence of the enemy, with his own army out of hand and two of his divisions separated by two miles from the main body of his command in direct line and nine miles by road. In this situation Hood was able to concentrate two of his army-corps against Hooker's corps and Newton's division of Howard's corps of Thomas' army and attack them with the river at their back.

July 20,  
1864

Surely, a more efficient use of small numbers has seldom

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, II, 26, 29.

been made. But it failed. Thomas' veteran troops were not stampeded but held their lines and fired steadily, while General Thomas displayed all that firmness in battle of which he was capable, and Hooker was, as always, brave and efficient as a subordinate.

The Confederates, also veterans, knowing the deadliness of rifle-fire, lacked the dash of their early battle-fields, but fought bravely and lost heavily. The repulse was costly to an army scarcely half the size of its adversary, but the offensive policy had been adopted as a last resort and was to be carried on to a conclusion.

Hood now learned from Fitz-Hugh Lee, his commander of cavalry, that Sherman's left was entirely in the air because

[McPherson] had sent away the whole of Garrard's division of cavalry during the night of the 20th to Covington, thirty miles east, to burn two important bridges across the Ucofauhatchee and Yellow rivers, to tear up the railroad, to damage it as much as possible from Stone mountain eastward, and to be gone four days.<sup>5</sup>

July 22,  
1864

Hood immediately determined to attempt Lee's and Jackson's triumphant manœuvres at the second Manassas and Chancellorsville. Withdrawing his center and left to the new trenches in the rear, he sent Hardee's corps and Lee's cavalry to attack the flank and rear of McPherson's army on the extreme Union left, while he held Cheatham's corps on the right of his line and the Georgia militia next to them, to take the Union troops between two fires. Stewart's corps was to neutralize Thomas' army.

The surprise of the twenty-second was even greater than that of the twentieth. Dodge's division of the Sixteenth Corps of McPherson's army was attacked in flank while in column of march. But the veteran troops were undismayed by the surprise. A simple left turn put them into a firing line, the most efficient battle formation for that and subsequent wars, though not so understood at the time.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 79.

Sherman was at his headquarters at the Howard house in the center of his lines, and with him was McPherson, commander of the left wing, talking about Hood's aggressive disposition, when they were alarmed by the sound of firing to the left and rear of McPherson's army.

McPherson started for his post, but rode among Confederate soldiers who had broken his line and was killed instantly.

July 22,  
1864

The cataclysmic effect upon troops whose army-commander has been killed in action, attributed to the deaths and woundings of Jackson, Albert Sidney Johnston, J. E. B. Stuart, and Longstreet, was to be expected here, if ever. The exposed wing was assailed in rear, on flank, and in front, for Hood now called Cheatham's corps from the defenses to the attack. All the circumstances were combined to create a rout. But no panic resulted. Attacked in rear, the troops fought from the front of their breastworks; attacked in front, they retired to the back of them. They repulsed all assaults and again inflicted losses which the Confederates could not afford.

May 2,  
1863  
May 11,  
1864  
April 6,  
1862  
May 6,  
1864

General Logan, succeeding to command in a critical situation for which he was not at all responsible, presented one of the outstanding illustrations of courage, presence of mind, and coolness in the whole history of war. An extraordinary sequel was that the general primarily responsible for preventing a catastrophe was rewarded by being superseded by General Howard, who had fallen victim to just such a flank attack at Chancellorsville.

May 2,  
1863

Sherman has been severely criticized for this action. His explanation long after the event was as follows:

But it first became necessary to settle the important question of who should succeed General McPherson? General Logan had taken command of the Army of the Tennessee by virtue of his seniority, and had done well; but I did not consider him equal to the command of three corps. Between him and General Blair there existed a natural rivalry. Both were men of great courage and talent, but were politicians by nature and experience, and it may be that for

this reason they were mistrusted by regular officers like Generals Schofield, Thomas, and myself. It was all-important that there should exist a perfect understanding among the army commanders, and at a conference with General George H. Thomas at the headquarters of General Thomas J. Woods, commanding a division in the Fourth Corps, he (Thomas) remonstrated warmly against my recommending that General Logan should be regularly assigned to the command of the Army of the Tennessee by reason of his accidental seniority. We discussed fully the merits and qualities of every officer of high rank in the army, and finally settled on Major-General O. O. Howard as the best officer who was present and available for the purpose; on the 24th of July I telegraphed to General Halleck this preference, and it was promptly ratified by the President. General Howard's place in command of the Fourth Corps was filled by General Stanley, one of his division commanders, on the recommendation of General Thomas. All these promotions happened to fall upon West-Pointers, and doubtless Logan and Blair had some reason to believe that we intended to monopolize the higher honors of the war for the regular officers. I remember well my own thoughts and feelings at the time, and feel sure that I was not intentionally partial to any class. I wanted to succeed in taking Atlanta, and needed commanders who were purely and technically soldiers, men who would obey orders and execute them promptly and on time; for I knew that we would have to execute some most delicate manœuvres, requiring the utmost skill, nicety, and precision. I believed that General Howard would do all these faithfully and well, and I think the result has justified my choice. I regarded both Generals Logan and Blair as "volunteers," that looked to personal fame and glory as auxiliary and secondary to their political ambition, and not as professional soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

And of the affair, Grant said:

I have no doubt whatever that he did this for what he considered would be to the good of the service; though I doubt whether he had an officer with him who could have filled the place as Logan would have done.<sup>7</sup>

The only adequate criticism of Sherman's defense for favoring Howard is that he was talking through his hat.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 85-86.

<sup>7</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, 235.

Von Moltke, the idol of the militarists, snubbed Sherman's arrogance. He said, speaking of the Civil War: "This colossal conflict was but a matter of two armed mobs chasing each other around the country from which nothing could be learned."<sup>8</sup>

Von Moltke, we may add, was also conversing through his *Pickelhaube* and was shown up later by Sheridan.

Sheridan, who had been called upon for advice by Bismarck during the battle of Gravelotte, had this to say of the Franco-German War:

Following the operations of the German armies from the battle of Gravelotte to the siege of Paris, I may, in conclusion, say that I saw no new military principles developed, whether of strategy or grand tactics, the movements of the different armies and corps being dictated and governed by the same general laws that have so long obtained, *simplicity of combination* and *manœuvre*, and the concentration of a numerically superior force at the vital point.<sup>9</sup>

General Fuller, the most intellectual of the English World War officers, states the facts:

It was because the Civil War in America was so unprofessional a conflict that it is so vastly interesting and its generalship so brilliant and instructive. In 1861 there were no generals in the United States Army who, from the European standard, could be classed as professional soldiers. A few were true students of war, a very different thing, and many had behind them the rough and tumble experiences of warfare in Mexico and of skirmishes with Red Indians and Mormons—these made them men and masters of men.<sup>10</sup>

It is obvious that Sherman borrowed the European pretense of class superiority to conceal a very shabby act.

The real explanation was army politics, a form of the disease fully as virulent as the common variety. Logan had succeeded to the command of the Army of the Tennessee by seniority upon the death of McPherson and had redeemed

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> *Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan*, II, 451-52.

<sup>10</sup> Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

May 16,  
1863  
June 27,  
1864

July 20,  
1864

the latter's and Sherman's faulty dispositions with great skill and gallantry. A veteran of the Mexican War, he had fought in all the battles in the West, had borne the greatest part of any subordinate in the Battle of Champion's Hill, and was the only corps-commander to engage his troops correctly at Kenesaw Mountain. In fact, his record was too good. Might not Thomas, whose skill and doggedness at Peach Tree Creek only redeemed his faulty march dispositions, fear that Logan, raised to an equality as army-commander and with his strong political backing, be preferred to himself, as Rosecrans, Grant, and Sherman had been, which, as it happened, only a slight margin of time prevented later?

Officers are dubbed political, volunteer, regular, professional, mercenary as often for ulterior as for descriptive purposes. The first could not more justly be applied to the brilliant Logan than the last to the dogged Thomas. Actually, Logan was the volunteer at his best, and Thomas was the regular in its most extreme form. A Southern believer in states' rights and a slave-owner, Thomas had parted from his home ties and their principles to cling to the army. The "Virginian," as Stanton had dubbed him, felt, not without cause, that his origin had hurt him in his career, and he turned to Sherman, who had been his college classmate, to keep this new threat away.<sup>11</sup>

May 14,  
1861

Now, Sherman was the least regular of the regulars. He had left the army for reasons of personal ambition, had lived quite contentedly among the slave-holders, had returned to the army in its hour of need on his own terms. A super-politician, hitched to a brother in the Senate, and the war's rising star, he denounced politicians; an excellent journalist, and a gossipy one—as we shall see later—he frothed at newspapers. If Logan bore no threat to his supremacy, he could not serve him. So his rights were ignored. Sherman intended to remain in the regular army

<sup>11</sup> See Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman, Fighting Prophet*, pp. 166, 182.

and wanted the loyalty and gratitude of regular officers, but not of any who might rival him.

If Logan was the senior officer in the Army of the Tennessee, Hooker was the senior general in the West. Except at the Battle of Chattanooga, where at least he had done as well as Sherman, he had distinguished himself in every battle. A regular and a West Pointer, as an army-commander he might rival Thomas, and Sherman too. So the choice fell on Howard, whose only qualification was that as a soldier he could not rival anybody.

At the very end of the war Grant transferred Howard to Washington and gave Logan command of the army he had served so well. In after years Logan took a partial revenge on Sherman. The latter, then general of the army, delighted to indulge in military "receptions." Logan, a leading member of Congress, was instrumental in reducing the general's salary so that he could no longer afford these entertainments. He also defeated military legislation desired by the general. Logan never learned of Thomas' leading part in his humiliation. He extolled and supported him as a rival of Sherman and delivered a funeral oration for him in the Senate when he died.

The repulse of the left flank proved to Sherman that he could not cut the road to Macon from that direction and that the bulk of the enemy was on that side of the city, and he adroitly moved by his right flank and continued the investment of Atlanta from the north.

July 22,  
1864

Hood sought to frustrate this move by another offensive. As the Army of the Tennessee, taken from the left flank, marched around the city, Hood crossed the chord of the circle and attacked the head of the column. Logan was again in command of the troops attacked, and drove back the enemy in the most complete defeat it had suffered in the campaign.

July 28,  
1864

In connection with the movement of his infantry, Sherman ordered his cavalry to advance from both flanks to

July 26,  
1864

July 31,  
1864

meet at Jonesboro and destroy the railroad, after which McCook's division was to return to the right flank, Garrard's to the left flank, and Stoneman's to raid to Macon and Andersonville and free the prisons there. Garrard returned safely, but McCook and Stoneman were caught separately and badly defeated, Stoneman being captured with the larger part of his troops. Much weakened by his offensives, Hood fell back on the simple defensive and extended his lines southward from Atlanta, parallel to Sherman's, just as Lee was extending his southwest from Petersburg, parallel to Grant's.

We have seen that Richmond and Petersburg were not originally included in a single defensive system, and have noticed the series of mishaps to the Union efforts that led to Lee's army finding itself in a line of unassailable fortifications from the north of Richmond to the south of Petersburg so long as to defy efforts to turn them during the year 1864.

Aug. 31,  
1864

Atlanta and Decatur were not so defended. In fact, Decatur had not been fortified at all. The consequence was that Sherman was able to hold the Nashville railroad close to Atlanta, swing his army west and south until Hood could no longer oppose him, and cut Hood's railroads at Jonesboro and Rough-and-Ready.

If a line some thirty or forty miles long had been fortified along the south banks of the Chattahoochee River and Peach Tree Creek, inclosing Decatur, a much longer resistance could have been undertaken. But the nature of trench warfare was not understood then, or fifty years later, for that matter. And even if it had been, and defenses appropriate to the warfare of its day had been constructed, the Confederacy could not have carried on with both of its armies besieged in their bastions.

Sept.  
1-2,  
1864

Hood was now cut off from the south and southwest, but his communications were open to the east. He withdrew from Atlanta, however, during the night, preserving his





*See map of Richmond, Petersburg, and Five Forks in same scale, facing page 280.*



army intact but losing great quantities of war material, a part of which he destroyed.

The capture of Atlanta was a manifold victory of enormous importance. Its outstanding feature was that it took the southern bastion of the Appalachian line. Thereafter, the remaining territory of the Confederacy lay open to invasion, without natural positions or fortifications to offset inferior numbers.

It took from the Confederacy and gave to the Union the transportation center of the South. In all operations to come, Hood must move by the outside lines; Sherman could cross the chords.

It gave Sherman a handsome choice of objectives: a segment of more than one hundred and eighty degrees was open to him from Birmingham, Alabama, to Greenville, South Carolina. He could reach navigable water as far north as Montgomery, as far west as Augusta. He came into possession of great factories, large storehouses, barracks, and hospital facilities ample for all needs, an oasis for rest, a base for further invasion.

The political effects were momentous. The "politician-baiter" produced an unanswerable political argument on the eve of the election which the "soldier candidate" of the Democrats—McClellan—could not answer. The effect upon the Confederates was as great. Georgia weighed the possibility of further resistance and withdrew her militia from the service of the Confederacy.

Sherman's first act was characteristic—to expel the population of the city. Military success with Sherman was only the preliminary to war against the inhabitants.

With the capture of Atlanta came the inevitable let-down of the victor, the desire for well-earned rest, for surcease from anxiety and fear, for enjoyment of overdue leave, besides the indulgence of necessary reëquipment and reorganization.

Such a let-down kept Lord Howe in Philadelphia in the

winter of 1777 and Napoleon in Moscow in 1812. Sherman's let-down was much less than theirs, and it is as certain that he would have got going again on his own account without prodding from Grant as it is that Grant himself would not have stood idle while Jefferson Davis whipped up the flagging spirits of Georgia, and Hood pulled his sorely tried army together and took the initiative away from the victors.

Grant, not subject to let-downs, telegraphed Sherman on September 10th, suggesting that, as Farragut had closed Mobile, Canby should take Savannah, and Sherman should march on Augusta, about half-way from there to Atlanta. On September 12th he sent Colonel Horace Porter to discuss the next move with Sherman.

Sept. 10,  
1864  
Aug. 23,  
1864

Sept. 12,  
1864

Sherman's plan, while he was still comfortable in Atlanta, was in substance that he should remain there while Grant and Canby opened up alternative bases for him to retire to. He wrote to Grant:

Now that Mobile is shut out to the commerce of our enemy, it calls for no further effort on our part, unless the capture of the city can be followed by the occupation of the Alabama river and the railroad to Columbus, when that place would be a magnificent auxiliary to my further progress into Georgia.

But Savannah, . . . once in our possession, and the river open to us, I would not hesitate to cross the state of Georgia with sixty thousand men, hauling some stores and depending on the country for the balance. Where a million of people find subsistence, my army won't starve. . . . I will therefore give it as my opinion that your army and Canby's should be reënforced to the maximum; that, after *you* get Wilmington, *you* should strike for Savannah and its river; that General Canby should hold the Mississippi river, and send a force to take Columbus, Georgia, either by the way of the Alabama or Appalachian river; *that I should keep Hood employed* and put my army in fine order for a march on Augusta, Columbia, and Charleston, and start as soon as Wilmington is sealed to commerce, and the city of Savannah is in our possession.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 48.

Again in the same letter, he said:

If you will secure Wilmington and the city of Savannah from your centre, and let General Canby have command over the Mississippi river and country west of it, I will send a force to the Alabama and Appalachicola . . . and if you will fix a day to be in Savannah I will insure our possession of Macon and a point on the river below Augusta.<sup>13</sup>

These plans, however, were based on the assumption that the Confederate armies would be in Sherman's front, that they would have to be fought on the way, and that Sherman's communications would be kept open, or when raided, reopened. The situation changed when Hood moved entirely around Sherman, established bases to the west, and attacked the Chattanooga-Atlanta railroad with his whole army.

The Confederate movement against Sherman's communications began before the capture of Atlanta with a raid by General Wheeler all the way up to Dalton, which was followed by a raid by General Forrest from western Tennessee. Efforts to bring Confederate troops across the Mississippi were defeated by the infantry and the gunboats of General Canby.

General Schofield had returned to Knoxville some weeks before; General Newton's division had been sent to Chattanooga and General Corse's division to Rome. Sherman now sent Thomas with one more division to Chattanooga and later to Nashville.

Jefferson Davis, driven to further desperate expedients by the fall of Atlanta, had come to Georgia to reanimate the insurrection. In order to strengthen the resistance in Georgia and to encourage the Confederate soldiers from Tennessee, he announced that the Confederate army would march north, cut Sherman's communications, and force him to a ruinous retreat like that of Napoleon from Moscow.

Sherman says in his *Memoirs* that these speeches put him

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

on his guard and led him to make suitable dispositions of his troops. His messages to Grant indicate clearly that they affected him profoundly and that his principal preoccupation from that time was to save his force rather than "to keep Hood employed." To recognize this fact is not to disparage Sherman. Classic history told him of the bitter defeat of Anthony in Parthia, of the fate of Crassus in the same land, and of Varro in Germany.

It was then only fifty years since Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow nine years after his disaster in Egypt; fifty years since the loss of his armies in Spain in 1814. Most ominous of all, there was to be remembered the popular German uprising in 1813, which might serve as a precedent for the population in Sherman's rear. In our own history the English had been glad to escape from Philadelphia in 1778; Burgoyne had been captured the previous year at Saratoga, and Cornwallis in 1781. Not long before that had occurred the catastrophe to Charles XII at Pultava.

We have seen that Sherman had advanced on Atlanta as though conducting a great siege from afar off, as though pushing a sap forward to the walls—as Alexander pushed forward his mole against Tyre—and that Johnston had maintained a passive resistance from Dalton back to the city.

In this form of warfare Sherman had been able to dispense with an effective cavalry force and a capable intelligence service, and he had neglected both of them. His cavalry, disastrously defeated in attacks on the Atlanta-Macon railroad, had become so demoralized that Hood had felt safe in sending all his own cavalry to raid the railroads in Tennessee. Yet, a raid by Stoneman against Hood's railroad, even when unopposed, had disappointed Sherman, and he did not know what to do about it. When Hood's army evacuated Atlanta, a powerful use of Sherman's cavalry might have anticipated the tactics of Appomattox and captured it, but Sherman's talents did not lie in that direction. The use of cavalry and the bold movements of troops

against the enemy's forces were outside his intellectual equipment.

So with Sherman's intelligence service almost nonexistent and his cavalry practically futile, Hood was moving around Georgia at will, and Sherman was substantially invested in the city he had captured.

By September 22nd Grant appreciated Sherman's difficulty and telegraphed him:

Sept. 22,  
1864

Do you not require a good cavalry leader? It has seemed to me that you have during your campaign suffered for the want of an officer in command of cavalry, whose judgment and dash could both be relied on. I could send you General Ayres, who, I believe, would make a capital commander and know him to be one of our best officers in other capacities.<sup>14</sup>

Sherman objected to Ayres and asked for Gregg or Wilson. But Meade did not want to lose Gregg, and pointed out that Sheridan had with him in the Valley generals Torbert, Merritt, Custer, Devin, Chapman, and McIntosh. The choice narrowed down to Wilson and Torbert.

In the end Wilson was sent, not only because of his ability, but because of his intimacy with General Sherman, to whom he had been of great value in the controversy with McClelland, and because of the jealousy between him and the other cavalry generals in the East. Ayres and Torbert remained in the East, the former to gather laurels at Five Forks, the latter to be deprived of his command of Sheridan's cavalry.

By the first of October Sherman's meager information convinced him that Hood had crossed the Chattahoochee River to the west. He was now on the defensive in Atlanta, and there came to Grant from him the first suggestion to escape from his predicament:

Oct. 1,  
1864

Hood is evidently across the Chattahoochee, below Sweetwater. If he tries to get on our road, this side of the Etowah, I shall attack him; but if he goes to the Selma & Talladega road, why will

Oct. 1,  
1864

<sup>14</sup> Quoted from J. H. Wilson, *Under the Old Flag*, II, 2.

it not do to leave Tennessee to the forces which Thomas has, and the reserves soon to come to Nashville, and for me to destroy Atlanta and march across Georgia to Savannah or Charleston, breaking roads and doing irreparable damage? We cannot remain on the defensive.<sup>15</sup>

Oct. 3,  
1864

On the third of October he learned that General Hood would strike the railroad near Marietta, and marched north with his entire army, except the Twentieth Corps which he left as a garrison for Atlanta. But Hood destroyed the railroad for eight miles, although repulsed in an attack on the base at Allatoona by the gallant Corse, and slipped away before Sherman could come up with him.

Sherman felt unable to cope with this new situation and telegraphed General Grant:

Oct. 9,  
1864

It will be a physical impossibility to protect the roads, now that Hood, Forrest, Wheeler, and the whole batch of devils, are turned loose without home or habitation. I think Hood's movements indicate a diversion to the end of the Selma & Talladega road, at Blue Mountain, about sixty miles southwest of Rome, from which he will threaten Kingston, Bridgeport, and Decatur, Alabama. I propose that we break up the railroad from Chattanooga forward, and that we strike out with our wagons for Milledgeville, Millen, and Savannah. Until we can repopulate Georgia, it is useless for us to occupy it; but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people, will cripple their military resources. By attempting to hold the roads, we will lose a thousand men each month, and will gain no result. I can make this march, and make Georgia howl! We have on hand over eight thousand head of cattle and three million rations of bread, but no corn. We can find plenty of forage in the interior of the State.<sup>16</sup>

He now heard that Hood was at Rome, but failing to connect with him there, he further telegraphed the commander-in-chief:

Hood is now crossing the Coosa, twelve miles below Rome, bound west. If he passes over to the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, had I not

<sup>15</sup> Sherman's *Memoirs*, II, 145.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 59.



better execute the plan of my letter sent you by Colonel Porter, and leave General Thomas, with the troops now in Tennessee, to defend the State? He will have an ample force when the reënforcements ordered reach Nashville.<sup>17</sup>

Oct. 10,  
1864

And again the next day:

We cannot now remain on the defensive. With twenty-five thousand infantry and the bold cavalry he has, Hood can constantly break my road. I would infinitely prefer to make a wreck of the road and of the country from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city; send back all my wounded and unserviceable men, and with my effective army move through Georgia, smashing things to the sea. Hood may turn into Tennessee and Kentucky, but I believe he will be forced to follow me. Instead of my guessing at what he means to do, he will have to guess at my plans. The difference in war would be fully twenty-five per cent. I can make Savannah, Charleston, or the mouth of the Chattahoochee (Appalachicola). Answer quick, as I know we will not have the telegraph long.<sup>18</sup>

Oct. 11,  
1864

A few days later he wrote to General Grant:

On the supposition, always, *that Thomas can hold the line of the Tennessee*, and very shortly be able to assume the offensive as against Beauregard, I propose to act in such manner against the material resources of the South as utterly to negative Davis' boasted threats and promises of protection. If we can march a well-appointed army right through this territory, it is a demonstration to the world, foreign and domestic, that we have a power which Davis cannot resist. This is not war, but rather statesmanship.<sup>19</sup>

Nov. 6,  
1864

And again: "I will see that Atlanta itself is utterly destroyed."<sup>20</sup>

From Rome, Hood went to Resaca, which he threatened but did not attack, destroyed the railroad some twenty miles to Tunnel Hill, and slipped away to Lafayette.

In operating against Hood in northern Georgia and Ala-

<sup>17</sup> Sherman's *Memoirs*, II, 153.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted from T. B. Van Horne, *Life of Major-General G. H. Thomas*, p. 257.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 166.

bama, Sherman had the advantages of the defensive, possession of the railroad and a number of fortified bases, control of the river, and a numerical preponderance of between two and three to one; but without cavalry or intelligence service he never knew where Hood was in time to act against him. Hood operated in friendly country, kept track of all of Sherman's columns, avoided them easily, and could have struck them at will. He records that only the low morale of his troops prevented him from attacking Sherman. Wilson says that at Gaylesville, Sherman was open to defeat in detail.

Glaring as Sherman's failure was in this campaign—and it was not dissimilar to Napoleon's failure after Borodino—it should be said for him that he did not become lethargic as Napoleon had, nor did he get rattled. He conceived a way to avoid his predicament without material or moral loss to himself and with damage to the enemy, and insisted upon it until Grant acquiesced over the objections of Lincoln.

To Grant's fearless mind, the suggestion of a retreat from Atlanta to the sea without defeating Hood was repugnant, as shown by his replies to Sherman:

Oct. 11,  
1864

Your despatch of October 10th received. Does it not look as if Hood was going to attempt the invasion of Middle Tennessee, using the Mobile and Ohio and the Memphis and Charleston roads to supply his base on the Tennessee River about Florence or Decatur? If he does this, he ought to be met and prevented from getting north of the Tennessee River. If you were to cut loose, I do not believe you would meet Hood's army, but would be bushwhacked by all the old men and little boys, and such railroad guards as are still left at home. Hood would probably strike for Nashville, thinking that by going north he could inflict greater damage upon us than we could upon the rebels by going south. If there is any way of getting at Hood's army, I would prefer that, but I must trust to your own judgment. I find I shall not be able to send a force from here to act with you on Savannah. Your movements, therefore, will be independent of mine—at least until the fall of Richmond takes place. I am afraid Thomas, with such lines of road as he has to protect, could not prevent Hood from going north. *With Wilson*

*turned loose with all your cavalry, you will find the rebels put much more on the defensive than heretofore.*<sup>21</sup>

Again on October 11th Grant telegraphed to Sherman:

If you are satisfied the trip to the sea-coast can be made, *holding the line of the Tennessee River firmly*, you may make it, destroying all the railroad south of Dalton or Chattanooga, as you think best.<sup>22</sup>

On the first of November Grant indicated that Sherman had been dilatory:

Do you not think it advisable, now that Hood has gone so far north, to entirely ruin him before starting on your proposed campaign? With Hood's army destroyed, you can go where you please with impunity. *I believed and still believe, if you had started south while Hood was in the neighborhood of you, he would have been forced to go after you.* Now that he is so far away he might look upon the case as useless, and he will go in one direction while you are pushing in the other. If you can see a chance of destroying Hood's army, attend to that first, and make your other move secondary.<sup>23</sup>

Nov. 1,  
1864

But the next day Grant authorized the movement in these words:

I do not see that you can withdraw from where you are to follow Hood, without giving up all we have gained in territory. I say, then, go on as you propose.<sup>24</sup>

Nov. 2,  
1864

To Lincoln, the suggested move was calamitous. From his viewpoint, the situation between the belligerents, if not perfect, was excellent. The Mississippi River was conquered to the sea, including New Orleans. The forts at Mobile, Pensacola, Newport News, Beaufort, and New Berne were occupied by Union forces. The states of Tennessee and upper Mississippi had been overrun; Atlanta had been captured; Richmond was under siege; the blockade was nearly complete. If matters remained only *in status quo*, he could negotiate a peace that would restore the nation. To risk the

<sup>21</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 429-30. Italics mine.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

<sup>23</sup> Sherman's *Memoirs*, II, 164. Italics mine.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

loss of all the gains in the West in order to break a few railroads and burn a few towns appeared to him insane.

He did not understand Sherman's limitations which prevented him from leading a bold offensive after Hood. His opposition was nurtured by Rawlins, Grant's chief-of-staff. Rawlins had much the same battle temperament as his chief, but could not take into consideration the limitations of other men. He knew that Grant, in Sherman's position, would smash Hood by quick moves of the Army of the Tennessee; that would be elementary compared with those he had used in the Vicksburg campaign.

Grant, however, comprehended Sherman. He saw that Sherman could not make bold battle manœuvres, that there was no other general under his command capable of making them. Even Sheridan, master of battle-fields, was loth to venture into enemy territory. His unwillingness to attack the roads in rear of Richmond had upset Grant's own plan of campaign against Lee.

If the idea ever occurred to him to go West and take command against Hood, he never mentioned it. He had confidence in Sherman, in that general's peculiar kind of warfare. He was not lacking in confidence in Thomas as a general on the defensive, so he said: "Go on, then, as you propose."

Sherman had leaned heavily on Thomas on the march to Atlanta. He had rewarded him with the head of Logan. Now the military situation created a conflict of interests which opened a rift between Sherman and Thomas never to be closed. Thomas had proposed the flank attack upon Resaca, but the movement had been given to another. His biographer tells us that when Atlanta was captured he had proposed to move his own army to the sea.<sup>25</sup> That was in the period of triumph while Hood was at Lovejoy. Now, with the tables turned and Hood threatening Tennessee, Sherman wished to take all the armies to the sea and leave the fragments of troops in Tennessee broken up, unorganized,

<sup>25</sup> Van Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

and without transportation to conflict with Hood's force.

Sherman said: "Hood is not going to enter Tennessee. Keep enough force to watch the river below and at the shoals and let all the rest march to me or to reinforce the railroad."<sup>26</sup>

Oct. 17,  
1864

But Thomas replied:

I have received your despatch from Ship's Gap of yesterday noon. Am ready to carry out your orders should Hood attempt to come into Tennessee. General Wilson will take a duplicate of this to you and will explain my views on your plan of operation. . . . There is one thing, however, I don't wish . . . to be in command of the defense of Tennessee, unless you and the authorities at Washington deem it absolutely necessary.<sup>27</sup>

Oct. 18,  
1864

Thomas again said: "I hope you will adopt Grant's idea of turning Wilson loose rather than undertake the plan of a march with the whole force through Georgia to the sea."<sup>28</sup>

Oct. 17,  
1864

When Wilson reached Sherman, the latter did not use him but directed him to turn over enough horses and equipment to General Kilpatrick to outfit two cavalry divisions, then to report to General Thomas at Nashville and organize a cavalry-corps for the defensive campaign to be fought in Tennessee. It was then that Sherman made the interesting statement to Wilson indicating how thoroughly he was upset by Hood's maneuvers:

Wilson, I am a damned sight smarter man than Grant; I know a great deal more about war, military history, strategy, and grand tactics than he does; I know more about organization, supply and administration and about everything else than he does; *but I'll tell you where he beats me and where he beats the world. He don't care a damn for what the enemy does out of his sight, but it scares me like hell!*" He added: "*I am more nervous than he is. I am more likely to change my orders or to countermarch my command than he is.* He uses such information as he has according to his

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 255-56.

best judgment; he issues his orders and does his level best to carry them out without much reference to what is going on about him, and, so far, experience seems to have fully justified him.<sup>29</sup>

As we have seen before, Sherman left the army while a young lieutenant. The wide military education to which he lays claim had been obtained during his career as a civilian. So had Butler's.

The situation became steadily worse. Hood took the crossing of the Tennessee at Florence and also opened up a line of communication with Corinth, captured by Halleck after Shiloh and held by Grant all through 1862, but now back in Confederate hands.

More anxious than ever to retreat to the sea, Sherman insisted that by doing so he would draw Hood in pursuit, but on November 11th he wired to Thomas:

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI,  
IN THE FIELD, KINGSTON, GA., November 11, 1864.

Nov. 11,  
1864

MAJOR-GENERAL THOMAS,  
*Nashville, Tennessee:*

Despatch to-night received. All right. I can hardly believe Beauregard would attempt to work against Nashville from Corinth, as a base at this stage of the war, but all information seems to point that way. If he does you will whip him out of his boots. But I think you will find commotion in his camp in a day or two. Last night we burned Rome, and in two days more will burn Atlanta, and he must discover that I am not retreating, but on the contrary, fighting for the very heart of Georgia. About a division of rebel cavalry made its appearance this morning south of the Coosa River, opposite Rome, and fired on the rear guard as it withdrew. Also two days ago some of Iverson's cavalry—about eight hundred—approached Atlanta from the direction of Decatur, with a section of guns and swept round toward Whitehall and disappeared in the direction of Rough and Ready. These also seem to indicate that Beauregard expected us to retreat. I hear of about fifteen hundred infantry down at Carrollton, and also some infantry at Jonesboro', but what number I cannot estimate. These are all the enemy I know to be in this neighborhood, though rumor is that Breckenridge

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 17. Italics mine.

has arrived with some from West Virginia. To-morrow I begin the movement laid down in my Special Field Order 115, and shall keep things moving thereafter. By to-morrow morning all trains will be at or north of Kingston, and you can have the exclusive use of all the rolling stock. By using detachments of recruits and dismounted cavalry in your fortifications, you will have Schofield and Stanley and A. J. Smith, strengthened by eight or ten new regiments and all of Wilson's cavalry, you could safely invite Beauregard across the Tennessee, and prevent his ever returning. I still believe, however, that the public clamor will force him to turn and follow me, in which event you should cross at Decatur and move directly towards Selma, as far as you can transport supplies. The probabilities are the wires will be broken to-morrow and that all communication will cease between us; but I have directed the main line to be left and will use it, if possible, and wish you to do the same. You may act however on the certainty that I sally from Atlanta on the 16th with about sixty thousand men well-provisioned, but expecting to live liberally on the country.

W. T. SHERMAN,  
*Major-General.*<sup>30</sup>

Thus at the last minute, while not conforming to Thomas' demands for troops, especially for his own corps, the Fourteenth, Sherman met them in part by leaving him the small Fourth and Twenty-third corps. Thomas replied:

NASHVILLE, November 12th, 1864, 8:30 A. M.

Nov. 12,  
1864

MAJOR-GENERAL SHERMAN:

Your despatch of 12 o'clock last night received. I have no fears that Beauregard can do us any harm now, and, if he attempts to follow you, I will follow him as far as possible. If he does not follow you, I will then thoroughly organize my troops, and believe I shall have men enough to ruin him unless he gets out of the way very rapidly. The country of Middle Alabama, I learn, is teeming with supplies this year, which will be greatly to our advantage. I have no additional news to report from the direction of Florence.

I am now convinced that the greater part of Beauregard's army is near Florence and Tusculumbia, and that you will have at least a

<sup>30</sup> Van Horne, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-68.

clear road before you for several days, and that your success will fully equal your expectations.

GEORGE H. THOMAS,  
*Major-General.*<sup>31</sup>

And so Sherman, leaving to Thomas the post of honor, set forth upon the road to victory.

Because of the great victories that followed fast upon its successful conclusion and to which it contributed so largely, the purpose of Sherman's march is generally lost to sight. It was a retreat—not a retreat like Napoleon's from Moscow, or Anthony's from Parthia,<sup>32</sup> or even like Clinton's from Philadelphia, but a retreat from which the retreaters emerged stronger than when he started, while the force from which he retreated was being beaten elsewhere.

Because he had begun his preparations to move to the seacoast while he and Hood were close together near Rome, Sherman had planned to take all his armies with him. After Hood moved to Tusculumbia and seized the crossing of the Tennessee, he heeded Thomas's almost frantic requests for troops and sent back the Fourth and Twenty-third corps. He sent back all the wounded and sick, the foot-sore and incompetent, retaining the pick of the three armies for his own movement, all his mounted cavalry, all his trains, and all his pontoons. Except for an insufficiency of cavalry, which he had ignored, he had the best army on the continent in personnel and organization.

He was the most experienced general on either side in conducting marches. He had seen Grant's methods at Vicksburg and had himself marched from Memphis to Chattanooga and from Vicksburg to Meridian and back. When he left Atlanta he was almost half-way from Hood's army at Florence to the seacoast. There was no likelihood that Lee could break away from Grant's vice-like grip, join such other troops as could be raised, and fall upon him, but in the event of such a contingency he was prepared to shift

<sup>31</sup> Sherman's *Memoirs*, II, 169.

<sup>32</sup> Guglielmo Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*.



his proposed destination of Ossibaw Sound to Brunswick or the Gulf Coast.

Sherman's army marched to the sea in thirty-nine days, devastating the country as it went along. The only incidents of historical importance were the occupation and destruction of Milledgeville, the state capital, and the action of General Jefferson C. Davis in leaving a large band of refugee Negroes on the western bank when he crossed Ebenezer Creek. Sherman defended the act as a military necessity, but the abolitionists raised a great outcry, denouncing Davis as an Indiana Democrat and a believer in slavery.

In fact, the resistance encountered was negligible. At this stage in the war the Union forces occupied western and northern Virginia, Tennessee, and northern Georgia. The flotilla on the Mississippi River cut off Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Sherman had left Alabama and Mississippi behind him. What territory of the Confederacy was still uninvaded had "robbed the cradle and the grave"<sup>33</sup> to recruit Lee's and Hood's armies.

The march demonstrated that Grant was correct when he said that Wilson and a cavalry force could do everything against the enemy that Sherman's army could do. Yet Sherman's march had such a moral effect on friend, foe, and neutral as to make it a prime factor in the final victory, and, as such, it deserves its place in the poetry and martial music of the nation—even though it took the best sixty thousand men of the North permanently out of the war and, as a strange sequel, took another thirty thousand men to protect them.

Sherman reached Savannah on December 9th, and the next day he occupied all the ground between the Savannah and the Ogeechee rivers. On the twelfth the cavalry made contact with the navy in St. Catharine's Sound, and on the thirteenth, Haines's division of the Fifteenth Corps—Sherman's old division—brilliantly stormed Fort

Dec. 9,  
1864

<sup>33</sup> Grant's *Memoirs*, II, 292.

McAllister on Ossibaw Sound, where supplies were easily landed. The retreat had been completed as planned—the most successful retreat ever made.

More than any general in history, Sherman had fulfilled Lord Wellington's best test of a general—"to know when to retreat and to dare to do it."

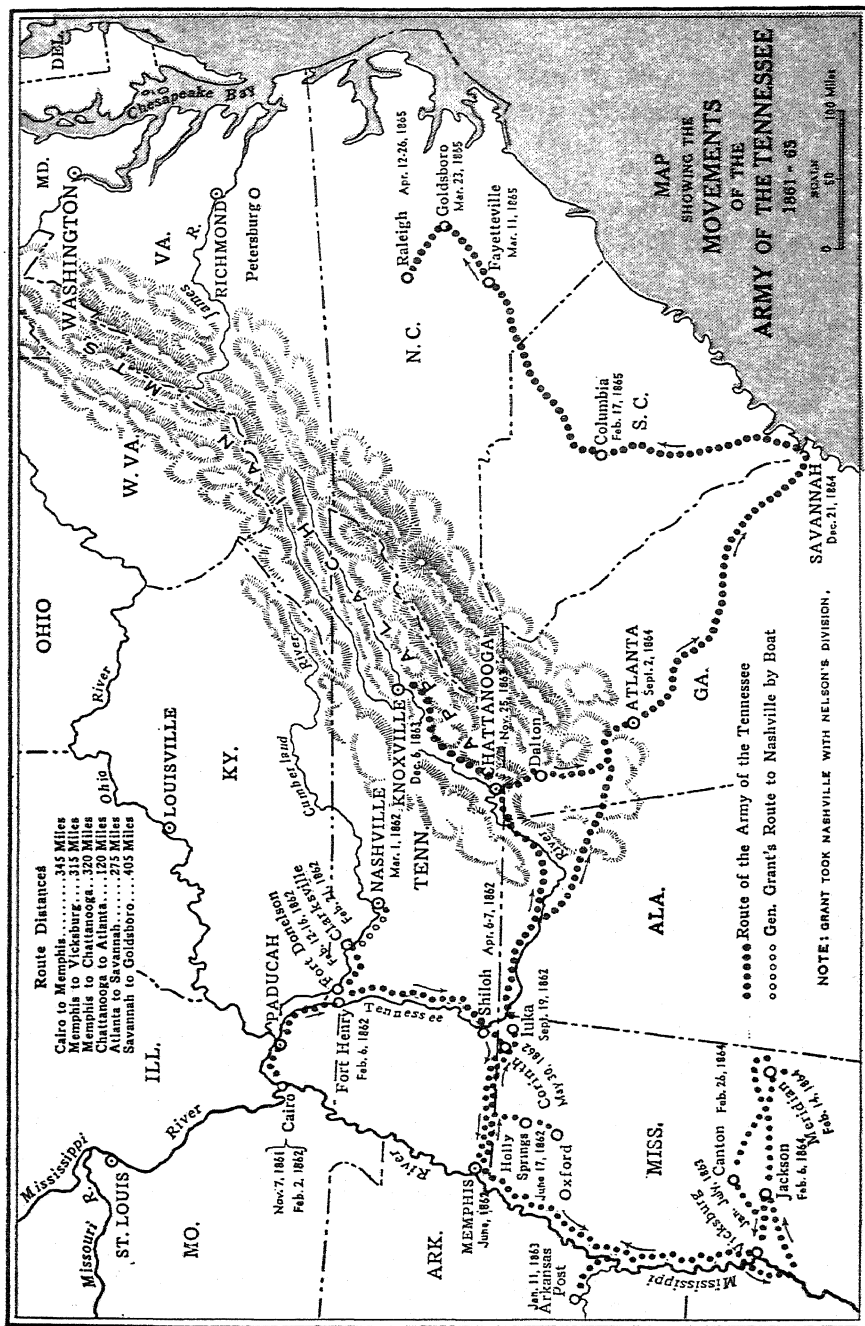
Turning now to the combat zone, we find that with Sherman's army withdrawn from the scene, Hood was in command of a stronger force than Thomas had in hand but a smaller one than Thomas could gather together. His problem was to defeat Thomas's forces in detail as Grant had defeated Johnson's behind Vicksburg. He was delayed a week at Florence gathering supplies and awaiting shoes, and then started north.

Thomas was still too weak to meet Hood in the open field. He sent twenty thousand infantry of the Fourth and Twenty-third corps and four brigades of cavalry under Schofield forward to Pulaski as a delaying force in order to gain time, and began organizing an army at Nashville in his thorough, ponderous manner.

Rawlins had opposed Sherman's proposed march to the point of insubordination because he did not believe Thomas was strong enough to resist Hood. Now he came West with the power and prestige of chief-of-staff to the commander-in-chief and worked manfully to prevent the catastrophe he had feared. He drove through the "resistance that rises within the army itself,"<sup>34</sup> overcame Rosecrans' narrow and selfish objections to the transfer of troops from Missouri, and forced the wheels to move through the web of official red tape. It was he who moved A. J. Smith's corps from Missouri and fragments of troops from everywhere—in ample time for the victory, to be sure, but not until the crisis had passed.

Schofield's problem at Pulaski was to retreat fast enough to avoid being surrounded or forced to accept a pitched battle, and yet to stop Hood often enough and long enough

<sup>34</sup> A. L. Conger, *The Rise of U. S. Grant*, p. 325.





to prevent him from reaching Nashville before Thomas could receive necessary reinforcements.

General Hood, marching north, easily flanked Schofield out of Pulaski on the twenty-first of November, and the latter retreated to Columbia on the Duck River. On the twenty-eighth Hood tried to destroy Schofield. Pretending to attack in front, he sent his cavalry, followed by a corps of his infantry, across the Duck River and established them at Spring Hill in Schofield's rear. Schofield's force was almost cut off from its direct line of retreat and for a time was in great danger. If the Confederates had occupied the road from Columbia to Franklin or attacked Schofield's retreating troops on the march, he might have been severely defeated.

Nov. 21,  
1864

Nov. 28,  
1864

In his *Memoirs* Hood makes much of this opportunity lost by General Cheatham. Yet, the failure of Cheatham at Spring Hill was similar to the failure of Burnside at Spottsylvania and of Hooker at Chattanooga. Ordinary generals usually fail to take advantage of great opportunities, and they fail more often on the offensive when they have only scanty information of their opponents than when on the defensive in their own country where they know all about the movements of the enemy.

Having failed to cut off Schofield's retreat, Hood caught up with him at Franklin, a short day's march from Nashville, and attacked him savagely before he could get across the Harpeth River. It was his last chance for battle victory—indeed, the last chance of the Confederacy. The Confederate troops and their generals exposed themselves with all the glorious abandon the situation demanded. Five of the latter were killed and six wounded. Large numbers of Hood's small army were killed and wounded, but the attacks were all repulsed. Hood's great gamble had failed.

Nov. 30,  
1864

All during the Battle of Franklin, A. J. Smith's army-corps was arriving in Nashville, and Steedman also arrived from Chattanooga with five thousand men. Thomas had already organized and armed a corps of eight thousand

quartermasters. These, with Schofield's force, mustered sixty thousand combatants, half again as many as Hood commanded; yet he withdrew Schofield's army to the trenches of Nashville.

Grant acquiesced in Thomas's conduct of his retreat as far as Franklin. But when Thomas reported:

After Schofield's fight yesterday, feeling convinced that the enemy far outnumbered him both in infantry and cavalry, I determined to retire to the fortifications around Nashville, until General Wilson can get his cavalry equipped; he has now but about one-fourth the number of the enemy, and consequently is no match for him. I have two ironclads here with several gunboats, and Commander Fitch assures me Hood can neither cross Cumberland River, nor blockade it. I therefore think it best to wait here until Wilson equips all cavalry. If Hood attacks me here, he will be more seriously damaged than yesterday. If he remains until Wilson gets equipments, I can whip him, and will move against him at once. I have Murfreesboro strongly held, and therefore feel easy in regard to its safety. Chattanooga, Bridgeport, Stevenson, and Elk River bridge have also been strongly garrisoned.<sup>35</sup>

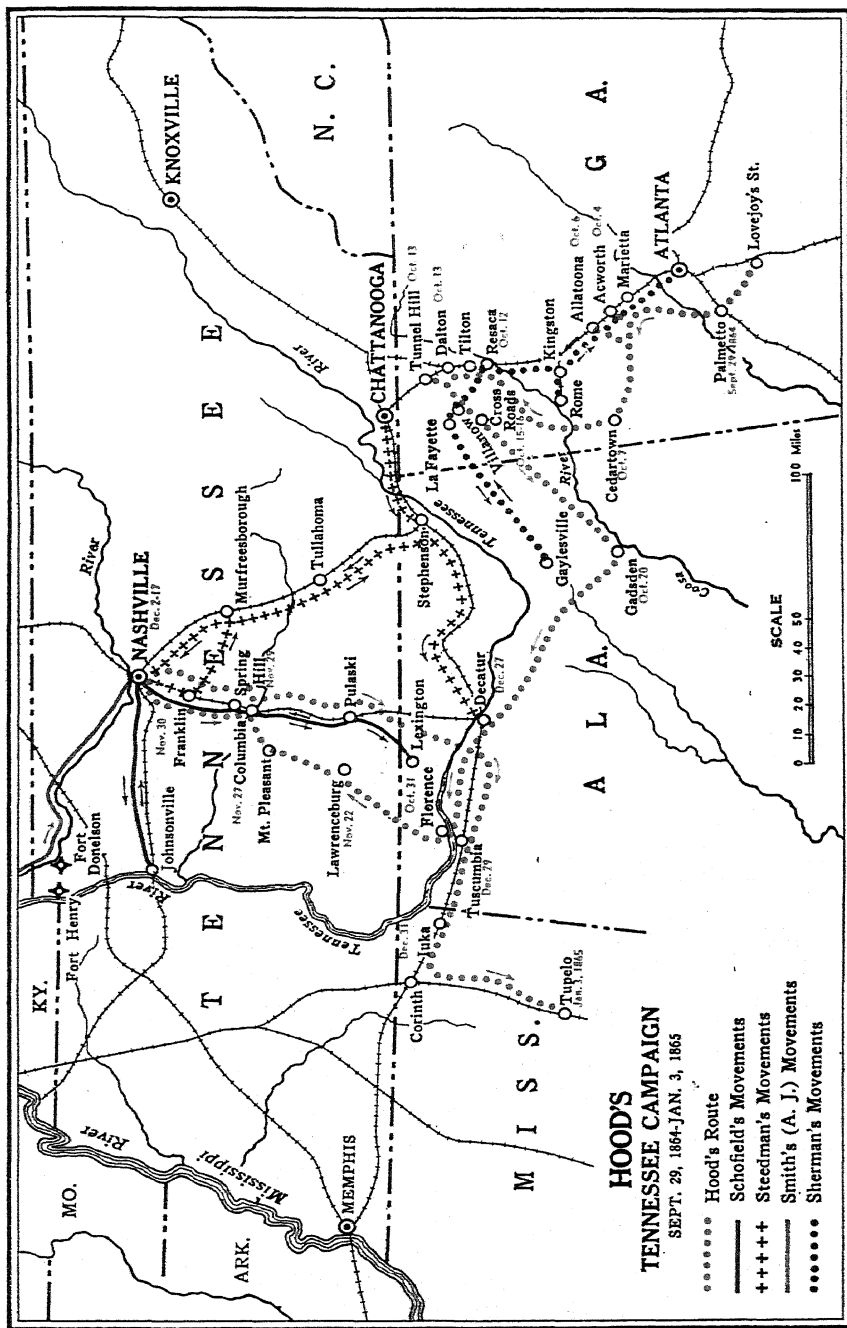
Grant replied:

If Hood is permitted to remain quietly about Nashville, you will lose all the road back to Chattanooga, and possibly have to abandon the line of the Tennessee. Should he attack you, it is all well; but if he does not, you should attack him before he fortifies. Arm, and put in the trenches, your quartermaster's employees, citizens, etc.

With your citizen employees armed, you can move out of Nashville with all your army, and force the enemy to retire, or fight upon ground of your own choosing. After the repulse of Hood at Franklin, it looks to me that, instead of falling back to Nashville, we should have taken the offensive against the enemy, where he was. At this distance, however, I may err as to the best method of dealing with the enemy. You will now suffer incalculable injury upon your railroads, if Hood is not speedily disposed of. Put forth, therefore, every possible exertion to attain this end. Should you get him to retreating, give him no peace.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 214-15.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.







Thomas's army was safe in Nashville, the Nashville that Grant had entered in the spring of 1862, more than two years before. But the whole state of Tennessee was lost. Chattanooga, which Grant had freed a year before, could not be held; nor could the railroad from Nashville to Chattanooga, if attacked. Corinth, the spoil of Shiloh, was already lost.

Sherman was marching out of Georgia. All the western Confederacy, so painfully conquered, was abandoned. And the peril did not end there. If Hood should recross the Cumberland in force, as he did by detachments, there was danger of a sympathetic rising in Kentucky. There were thousands of secessionist sympathizers in Indiana who might take up arms if he crossed the Ohio. Civil wars are unlike international wars in that a successful invasion may bring recruits and succor to the invader; perhaps a mass uprising of the population.

When Hood, after manœuvering Sherman out of Atlanta and driving Schofield into Nashville, came up to Thomas's superior army, Grant was at first anxious, then, as Thomas procrastinated, wild for Thomas to attack. Of all occasions in the war, this was one where a decisive victory was obtainable and desirable.

Thomas, ponderous, not seeking beyond his own danger, could not hurry. Wilson, blazing in his own eyes as a great cavalry soldier—he had bow-stringed all the generals in his command who might rival him<sup>37</sup>—saw nothing but his own career, which involved delay to mount his troops.

Grant urged, then ordered, attack; ordered Schofield to relieve Thomas and rescinded the order as Thomas promised to move; sent Logan to take command; and finally started for Nashville in person.

During these vital fifteen days, Hood drooped as though his failure to win at Franklin had crushed him. When wildly hazardous moves across the Cumberland and Ohio rivers might bring victory to his cause through uprisings of the population, when the capture of the railroad to Chattanooga

<sup>37</sup> Garrard, Stoneman, Elliott, and Grierson. See Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 20.

would create in the West a military situation superior to that existing in 1862, he not only remained in front of Nashville while Thomas organized his overwhelming force, but he detached troops to attack Murfreesboro, as he had seen Bragg so fatally detach troops from before Chattanooga.

Given his own time and organized to his satisfaction, Thomas moved from his trenches on December 15th and in a battle of two days won a complete victory. Hood's army dissolved. His efforts and achievements were all for naught.

With the accomplishment of all he had desired, Grant forgave Thomas his delay and made him a major-general in the regular army.

While Sherman was marching through Georgia and Thomas was organizing in his trenches, the country lived through an agony of suspense. News of Thomas's victory on the sixteenth of December and Sherman's arrival at the sea on the eighteenth sent it into ecstasies of delight. Thomas and Sherman were extolled to the skies, but for once the winner of a decisive battle received less acclaim than the director of a clever maneuver. It embittered Thomas, but Sherman kept his head. He wrote to Grant: "The flurry attending my recent success will soon blow over and give place to new developments."<sup>38</sup> How bitterly would be remembered those words in six short months.

Grant, who carried the entire responsibility, was eclipsed for the time under another shadow from which also he has not entirely emerged. When he consented to Sherman's plan to retreat to the sea, he let that general escape from a desperate situation of his own making and embark upon a movement that could not lose. His own position saved, Sherman ignored the crisis left behind. Thomas for his part, occupied a situation which he had protested and therefore one for which he could deny responsibility in event of catastrophe. He would not be blamed if he lost the ensuing campaign, and would be acclaimed victor if he won.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 362-63.

Dec. 16,  
1864

Dec. 18,  
1864

In allowing Sherman to go, Grant became responsible for the consequences. He anticipated that Hood would advance upon Thomas, and sent the doughty Rawlins to concentrate troops from the North and West to help Thomas repel the attack. He also urged Thomas to concentrate for battle all the troops in his command. Rawlins acted with all vigor and celerity. Thomas did not do this; instead, he held many points that he would not need if he defeated Hood and could not hold if his principal army were beaten. It was not until Grant had accumulated a great army at Nashville that he finally obeyed the orders to advance.

Criticism of Thomas' shortcomings, which amounted to disobedience, is futile. Neither education, nor experience, nor discipline could change a nature so inharmonious to his chief.

As the authority responsible for Sherman's retreat and the campaign in Tennessee, as well as the strategist who collected the army at Nashville, General Grant deserves the credit for both the destruction of Hood and the march to the sea.

## CHAPTER XIII

### APPROACHING THE END

**W**HEN we turned from the narrative of events taking place among the forces investing the fortress of Richmond-Petersburg to follow the fortunes of Grant's armies in the Shenandoah Valley and in Georgia, the Army of the Potomac had been depleted of the Sixth Corps and two divisions of cavalry. Weakened though it was by these enormous detachments, Grant continued a series of right and left movements to keep Lee from reinforcing Early or Johnston and to extend his own lines.

Aug. 13,  
1864

As Bowers wrote to Rawlins, on sick leave,

We shall so operate here as to prevent the enemy from sending troops to Hood to defeat Sherman as Beauregard did from Corinth in 1862 to defeat McClellan, and as Lee did last September to defeat Rosecrans.<sup>1</sup>

August  
13-14,  
1864

On August 13th-14th, hearing that Lee had sent three infantry divisions and one of cavalry to Early, whom Sheridan had followed as far as Fisher's Hill, Grant sent Hancock in command of a force consisting of his own corps, the Tenth Corps, and Gregg's cavalry division to make a surprise attack on Richmond. The infantry was embarked by daylight at City Point, started as if for Washington, and returned to Deep Bottom at night to meet the cavalry and infantry which marched overland. It was an exceedingly ingenious stratagem to take advantage of the situation as reported, reminiscent of the one used so successfully to surprise Bermuda Hundred in May.

But this time the execution of Grant's plan was bungled in the absence of the enemy. There was gross mismanage-

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, p. 247.

ment of the transport movement. The troops were not disembarked till daylight, and advanced to confront a fully prepared enemy, to find that only one Confederate division had gone from Lee's army. The expedition returned after some unsuccessful attacks on both sides.

Aug. 30,  
1864

On the other flank, Warren made his one contribution to the campaign. Under orders to make "such a demonstration as will force Lee to withdraw a portion of his troops from the valley,"<sup>2</sup> he took and held the Weldon railroad. He was somewhat roughly used by Hill in the process, but remained in possession of that vital line. Afterwards Hancock was sent with two infantry divisions and one of cavalry to destroy the railroad behind Warren, where he was attacked by Hill, defeated, and driven back to the trenches.

On September 19th, in pursuance of orders from Grant, Sheridan had attacked Early at the Opaquan, defeated him there and at Fisher's Hill, and had pursued him to Harrisonburg. Grant was urging Sheridan to advance against the railroads west of Richmond and was encouraging Sherman to fight Hood, who was now in his rear. He telegraphed Sherman: "I shall give them another shake here before the end of the week."

Sept. 19,  
1864

Sept. 28,  
1864

For this shake, another right and left, Grant chose other leaders. He commanded Ord to lay a pontoon-bridge at Varina and surprise Fort Harrison; Birney to cross the pontoon-bridge at Deep Bottom, march up the New Market road, and do the same to Fort Gilmer. Ord executed his mission perfectly and stormed Fort Harrison, falling wounded within the works. It is suggested by some writers that if Ord had not been wounded at Fort Harrison in the morning, he would have captured Fort Gilmer, the key to Richmond. Other failures similarly explained have rung the welkin, so let us not ignore this one.

Sept. 29,  
1864

Birney was dilatory. He was not ready to attack until three in the afternoon, when he assaulted Fort Gilmer from

Sept. 29,  
1864

<sup>2</sup> Andrew A. Humphreys, *The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65*, p. 273.

the front, aided by the Eighteenth Corps from Fort Harrison, but was repulsed.

As Lee now concentrated troops in Richmond to hold his lines and regain Fort Harrison, Grant ordered Meade to prolong his left as far as he could, with the South Side railroad as his ultimate objective. Meade took the Vaughn and Squirrel Level wagon-roads, but was severely repulsed in the effort to go on to the South Side railroad. Lee was repulsed at Fort Harrison.

Oct. 14,  
1864 Two weeks later, on October 14th, Sheridan defeated Early again at Cedar Creek, but Sherman, hopelessly involved in his war of movement with Hood, was pressing for permission to extricate himself by retreat to the sea-coast. Grant had decided to consent, and, wishing to cut Lee off from the south before Sherman started—for he was almost obsessed with the fear that Lee might slip away from Petersburg and attack Sherman, as Washington had slipped away from Cornwallis and attacked Princeton—he wrote to Meade on October 24th:

Make your preparations to march out at an early hour on the 27th to gain possession of the South Side Railroad, and to hold it, and fortify back to your present left. In commencing your advance, move in three columns, exactly as proposed by yourself in our conversation of last evening, and with the same force you proposed to take. Parke, who starts out nearest to the enemy, should be instructed that, if he finds the enemy intrenched, and their works well-manned, he is not to attack, but confront him and be prepared to advance promptly when he finds that by the movement of the other two columns to the right and rear of them they begin to give way. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Oct. 27,  
1864 ~~But~~ the movement failed. Hancock was severely defeated again. At the same time Butler was repulsed on the north bank of the James. The campaign closed with the South Side, the Danville, and the Virginia Central railroads in Lee's possession, but more or less damaged, and the James River Canal intact.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

Sherman was well on his way to the sea; Sheridan was back at Winchester. No other movements were contemplated until spring. Grant had left the army only three times since the previous May—twice to direct the forces in the Shenandoah Valley and once to consult the authorities in Washington. He now took advantage of the lull in the fighting to visit New York and Philadelphia.

Nov. 17,  
1864

The nation, however, had to bear the staggering expense of the war through the winter. Therefore, Grant explained to the leading business men of New York, visiting him at his hotel, that he was discontinuing his activities at Petersburg for the time because he wanted to keep Lee in his fortress and not force him to join the troops opposed to Sherman or Thomas.

At this time General Hancock was relieved and passed out of the war. His many failures in action do not seem to have counted against him. All his commanding officers and his subordinates, including Sheridan, spoke highly of him. He was later made a major-general in the regular army. It would appear that he possessed every military quality except that of achieving victory.

Nov. 26,  
1864

This recital of attacks, repulses, gains, sallies, and further attacks reads like the story of almost any siege, but there is this great difference between the siege of Richmond-Petersburg and the sieges of Paris, Plevna, or Port Arthur. Richmond-Petersburg could not be surrounded; the garrison was free to go to any other theater of war. Grant's attacks held it like a king in check while his other armies won the war.

During the year Grant had manœvered the great forces, widely dispersed, under his command over a vast territory to a common end. After issuing his orders for the campaign in May, he had devoted most of his attention to conducting the movements of the Army of the Potomac until he had closed Lee up in Petersburg-Richmond. After that he turned the direction of the Army of the Potomac over to Meade, giving only his spare time and energy to the forces under

1864

his eye. Undoubtedly these troops suffered from his distractions, but if they failed in winning conspicuous successes, they held all of the Confederacy's picked army in front of them and were to reap the results of their efforts in a cyclonic campaign in the spring.

Dec. 18,  
1864

Sherman's safe arrival at the sea, followed by Thomas' victory at Nashville and then by the capture of Savannah, ended any reasonable hope of successful secession. Peace commissioners passed through the Petersburg lines under flags of truce and held fruitless conferences with Lincoln. Lee asked to meet Grant with the same end in view, but Lincoln forbade the interview, so Grant made plans to use his overwhelming forces against his depleted enemy.

Dec. 6,  
1864

While Sherman was marching to the sea and Hood was still undefeated, Grant formed the plan to bring the bulk of Sherman's army to Virginia and surround Lee's army in his fortress before the Georgia railroads could be repaired. He directed Sherman to fortify a suitable post and hold it in order that he might maintain a foothold on the coast to threaten Georgia and keep the militia at home. His experience with the army- and corps-commanders in the East determined him to use his favorite assistant in the projected movement. "Select yourself the officer to leave in charge, *but you want in person*,"<sup>4</sup> he said. It is not unlikely that if this move had been carried out he would have put Sherman in command of the Army of the Potomac and Logan in command of Sherman's force, for he had authorized Meade to remove Warren at Spottsylvania and, according to Dana, had contemplated relieving Meade after his failure to storm Petersburg.

Dec. 12,  
1864

While waiting for the transports, Sherman began the siege of Savannah, but so slowly and cautiously that General Hardee, who had retreated into the defenses of the city, was able to escape across the Savannah River. This was a serious failure, for Grant had written to Sherman

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, II, 206. Italics mine.



after he learned that Thomas had overwhelmed and dispersed Hood's army:

If you capture the garrison of Savannah it certainly will compel Lee to detach from Richmond, or give us nearly the whole South. My own opinion is that Lee is averse to going out of Virginia, and if the cause of the South is lost he wants Richmond to be the last place surrendered. If he has such views, it may be well to indulge him until we get everything else in our hands.<sup>5</sup>

But if the garrison escaped, another important city fell to Sherman and another seaport was lost to the Confederacy.

Dec. 20,  
1864

Sherman now proposed to continue his war against the population:

With Savannah in our possession, at some future time if not now, we can punish South Carolina as she deserves, and as thousands of the people in Georgia hoped we would do. I do sincerely believe that the whole United States, North and South, would rejoice to have this army turned loose on South Carolina, to devastate that State in the manner we have done in Georgia, and it would have a direct and immediate bearing on your campaign in Virginia.<sup>6</sup>

Which Halleck matched by as ferocious a wish:

Should you capture Charleston, I hope that by *some accident* the place may be destroyed, and, if a little salt should be sown upon its site, it may prevent the growth of future crops of nullification and secession.<sup>7</sup>

Sherman answered in kind:

I attach more importance to these deep incisions into the enemy's country, because this war differs from European wars in this particular: we are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies. I know that this recent movement of mine through Georgia has had a wonderful effect in this respect. . . .

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

I will bear in mind your hint as to Charleston, and do not think "salt" will be necessary. When I move, the Fifteenth Corps will be on the right of the right wing, and their position will naturally bring them into Charleston first; and, if you have watched the history of that corps, you will have remarked that they generally do their work pretty well. The truth is, the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble at her fate, but feel that she deserves all that seems in store for her.<sup>8</sup>

Grant realized that Sherman, marching north through the Carolinas, would overcome resistance to the national authority as he went and progressively decrease the area in rebellion until it was reduced to the besieged army in the fortress. The danger in the plan was that as Sherman approached Virginia the distance between the force opposing him and Richmond would become so short that Lee might slip out of his defenses and, in a repetition of Stenbock's immortal manœuvre from Madgeburg to Gadebusch, overwhelm Sherman's army before Grant could interfere. To obviate this risk, he reverted to the plan to invade North Carolina which he had proposed in 1863 so that he could reinforce Sherman's army by a large army-corps and open a line of retreat for him to the seacoast.

During the previous October Grant had prepared a surprise attack on Fort Fisher, but had abandoned it when the secret was given away by gossipy officers. He renewed the plan early in December before Sherman's and Thomas' campaign had been concluded, and selected to command the expedition General Weitzel of the Army of the James, supposed, as a member of the engineer-corps, to be especially qualified for attack upon a fort.

General Butler, in whose department Fort Fisher lay, had conceived the plan to destroy the fort by blowing up a boat filled with gunpowder close beside it. To see this effected and to assert his authority in his district, General Butler accompanied the expedition which set out on the

Dec. 9,  
1864

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

ninth of December. He and Admiral Porter were in unpleasant relations. Butler was the senior, but Porter would not call on him. Butler would not waive his rank, so essential communications were carried on by intermediaries. To unavoidable delays, therefore, were added delays that could have been prevented by loyal coöperation.

The powder-ship was loaded with damaged powder rather than powder of full strength, and was not even fully loaded. Instead of being beached as close to the fort as possible, it was anchored a full three hundred yards away. The explosion was ineffective, but under all these handicaps it is impossible to tell whether Butler's idea was before its time, as apparently was his idea to use flame-throwers, which Meade ridiculed, and the suggestion of an unknown inventor to use poison-gas made from snuff. The damage caused by the accidental explosion of an ammunitions-ship in Halifax Harbor during the World War demonstrated that his plan would have succeeded if properly executed with modern powder. Flame-throwers and poison-gas also found recognition in the World War.

Dec. 23,  
1864

After the failure of the powder-boat, Butler landed about a third of the troops under protection of the fire of the fleet and had General Weitzel make a reconnaissance. This general reported that the fire of the fleet had not dismounted the artillery of the fort or damaged the parapet, and strongly advised against an assault, whereupon Butler, after recriminations with Porter, ordered the troops back on shipboard and returned to Fortress Monroe.

Dec. 25,  
1864

As Wilmington was the most difficult point on the coast to blockade, Porter was especially anxious for the army to close it. Therefore, he denounced the abandonment of the expedition in a vigorous letter to General Grant. Grant replied that he would send another expedition under a different leader. He chose General Terry to command the new expedition, the same General Terry who had advanced on his own initiative and broken the Richmond-Petersburg railroad the previous July when Beauregard withdrew the

troops opposite Bermuda Hundred to resist the Army of the Potomac at Petersburg. He was given the same orders as Butler and Weitzel, and misleading rumors were started to create the impression that the expedition was on its way to reinforce Sherman.

Jan. 6,  
1865

This time everything went like clockwork. Due to Terry's tactfulness, harmony prevailed between the two services. He landed his whole force under protection of the fleet and intrenched it between the fort and the small Confederate army on the mainland. The next day the fleet came much closer to shore than on the previous occasion and fired far more destructively than before. Admiral Porter contributed a landing-force of blue-jackets and marines, ordered "to board the fort in a seamanlike manner." Unfortunately, his observations of military operations in the river campaign had not taught him anything. He sent his blue-jackets to the assault armed only with short cutlasses and pistols. They were repulsed with great loss.

Jan. 13,  
1865

Terry intrenched himself against interference from the land side and then stormed the defenses with skill and determination. His losses were heavy but fully justified by the result—the closing of the principal port of the South and the capture of the base from which to occupy Wilmington and open the road to join Sherman in North Carolina. For his outstanding service General Terry was made a major-general of volunteers and a brigadier-general in the regular army.

Jan. 15,  
1865

By contrast, Butler was removed from command of the Army of the James and was succeeded by Ord. Weitzel was continued in command of his corps for the time, but was removed later.

General Schofield's corps was now embarked on river-boats at Florence, Alabama, descended the Tennessee River to Paducah, ascended the Ohio River to Cincinnati, and journeyed from there by railroad to Alexandria, Virginia. There they were forced to wait because of ice in the river, and Grant utilized the time to take General Schofield down

Jan. 15,  
1865

Jan. 31,  
1865

the coast and personally reconnoiter Wilmington from Fort Fisher. General Schofield then conducted his corps to that point and, adding to it General Terry's command, manœvered the Confederates out of Wilmington.

Feb. 19,  
1865

General Grant now ordered him to push inland and connect with General Sherman as soon as the latter should reach that neighborhood. He gave Schofield absolute liberty of movement, even to cutting away from his base. The significance in the fact that General Grant chose General Schofield for this independent mission of great importance rather than any of the army- or corps-commanders in the Armies of the Potomac and the James will not be lost on students of the overland campaign.

Schofield advanced from New Berne on the sixth of March, and after small battles reached Goldsboro on the twenty-first. Terry started up the railroad from Wilmington on the fifteenth and arrived at Goldsboro on the twenty-second.

March 6,  
1865

Mar. 21,  
1865

On December 27th, Grant gave Sherman his definite orders to march overland through the Carolinas after fortifying an intrenched camp at Pocotaligo on the mainland across the river from Isle Royal. He left him entirely untrammelled by instructions, but his suggestion of the place at which Sherman would make connections with the coast, namely, Fayetteville and Goldsboro, where he had directed Schofield, proved correct.

Dec. 27,  
1864

In the following order is the first suggestion of Grant's final campaign to Appomattox:

I have thought that, Hood being so completely wiped out for present harm, I might bring A. J. Smith here, with fourteen to fifteen thousand men. With this increase I could hold my lines, and move out with a greater force than Lee has. It would compel Lee to retain all his present force in the defenses of Richmond or abandon them entirely.<sup>9</sup>

Sherman started north on the first of February and marched to Goldsboro, North Carolina, a distance of four

Feb. 1,  
1865

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

hundred and twenty-five miles, in fifty days, an average of eight and one-half miles a day. The march was delayed by much rain, many rivers, and a small force of the enemy skirmishing in front. He occupied Columbia and forced the evacuation of Charleston, both of which cities were badly burned. At Fayetteville, on the Cape Fear River, he was met by a river-boat from Terry, and contact was made with Schofield and the North.

Feb. 17,  
1865

Mar. 11,  
1865

Mar. 18,  
1865

Mar. 19,  
1865

Mar. 21,  
1865

On the eighteenth of March, while his columns were widely separated, General Slocum's wing was attacked by the whole force of General Johnston's army composed of the refugees from Nashville, the garrisons of Savannah and Charleston, troops sent from Richmond, and the increment that comes to every army fighting on its own soil. Slocum was strong enough to hold his ground, and when Sherman brought troops from Howard's columns to the scene, he had Johnston greatly outnumbered and with his back to Mill Creek. The opposing armies remained in this position for two days until Sherman was favored by one of those breaks of fortune which come to a commander on rare occasions.

Mar. 21,  
1865

Just as Grant on his own initiative had opened fire from the San Cosme church-steeple and as Lawlor had charged the Black River bridge, so now without orders, Mower, commanding a division in Howard's wing, attacked and drove in Johnston's left flank and advanced almost up to the only bridge in Johnston's rear over which his army could retreat. An attack all along the line would have destroyed Johnston's army. But Sherman in battle was not Worth or Grant. The opportunity for victory was not apparent to this cautious man, whose whole thought, as he says in his *Memoirs*, was for his own complete safety. He ordered Mower back into his works and waited for the arrival of the rest of his army and for Schofield's and Terry's force.

Johnston retreated that night, and Sherman joined Scho-

field and Terry in the vicinity of Goldsboro on the twenty-third. Sherman correctly describes his campaign:

Mar. 23,  
1865

We had in mid-winter accomplished the whole journey of four hundred and twenty-five miles in fifty days, averaging ten miles per day, allowing ten lay-days, and had reached Goldsboro' with the army in superb order, and the trains almost as fresh as when we had started from Atlanta.<sup>10</sup>

Sherman's actual method of warfare was so different from anything taught in the schools, then or since, that it requires interpretation.

Grant had learned at Holly Springs that he could subsist his army without a line of communication, and he had put this discovery to use in his campaign against Vicksburg. He had further defended his army besieging Vicksburg by destroying Jackson and the roads in his rear, a resurrection of Louvois' injunction, "*Brulez bien le Palatinat.*" From that time he employed destruction as an adjunct to a military campaign. Sherman made it *his principal objective, which he protected with his army.*

In the days of ancient Greece, armies were generally unable to capture cities. In consequence, the weaker side locked itself within its walls. The stronger, if unable to starve out the city, had recourse to ravaging the countryside. This form of warfare characterized the Peloponnesian Wars, during which Spartans harried the country up to the walls of Athens, and the Athenians retaliated as well as they could by blockading the Spartan coast. The Romans not only carried everything before them in the field, but were able also to capture cities by attack. They were not lacking in cruelty, but they did not find the systematic destruction of the countryside a necessary form of war. The science of siegecraft was again lost in the Middle Ages, and invading armies plundered the country in order to compel the inhabitants to accept battle. The Battle of Hastings is the

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

most celebrated result of this form of warfare, as the devastation of southern England by William the Conqueror induced Harold to fight at Senlac.

With the invention of gunpowder, fortified cities again lost their importance, and victory in the field gave the winner complete ascendancy. Such was still the case at the time of the Napoleonic wars, on which all later military principles have been based, although it should be noted that Napoleon's greatest offensive victories were in the early days of his career and ended with Friedland. After 1812, defensive battle prevailed, and armies were not destroyed on the battle-field except when sacrificed like Napoleon's at Waterloo.

June 14,  
1807

In the Civil War the change in weapons was again making victory by battle increasingly difficult. Lee had been able to win tactical successes in the early years of the war which intimidated inferior commanders and caused them to retreat. Grant could win victory in the field somewhat by the Napoleonic method until the summer of 1864, when, with all his resources and attacks, he only succeeded in forcing Lee into his fortifications of Richmond-Petersburg. With the exception of Bragg at Chickamauga and Sheridan in the Shenandoah, no other general was able to obtain decisive results until Thomas won the Battle of Nashville under as favorable circumstances as were ever presented in war.

Sherman, on his part, was temperamentally unfitted for pitched battle. He did besiege Johnston from Dalton to Atlanta. He even pinched out Hood from Atlanta, but once Hood was in the open field, Sherman could do nothing with him and therefore had recourse to ravaging the country—the methods of the Punic Wars and the Middle Ages. In his march to the sea he did not compel the Confederates to come and attack him, but he did compel them to march out and fight Thomas in the impregnable position of Nashville.

We hear much about the immutable principles of war, and no one has been given to this form of pedantry more than Sherman. Yet, no general ever violated the maxims



of war more violently than Sherman, and no one made war more successfully.

Instead of combining the vast superiority of forces at his command against Hood, he divided his forces and took far the strongest fraction with him completely away from the war. To protect this eccentric army, Grant had to send to Goldsboro forces that would have made his Appomattox campaign easy. And yet, the result of this eccentricity was that Hood's army was completely destroyed. Thomas remained in control of the whole southwest Confederacy while Sherman took fire and sword against Georgia and the Carolinas.

<sup>10</sup> Frederick the Great's epigram, "If I were mindful only of my own glory I would choose always to make war in my own country, for there every man is a spy and the enemy can make no movement of which I am not informed," has never been questioned, probably because he was a king. It was fortunate for him and his country that Sherman was not in command of the armies that invaded it.

Frederick's theory is correct if war is to be conducted by quick and decisive battles; but if it is to be a series of skirmishes and raids, obviously the country in which the campaign is conducted will be ruined and unable to support its army. Indeed, Sherman's method can be described in a paraphrase of famous epigram: "It is not glorious, but it is war."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "It is magnificent, but it is not war," said General Pierre Bosquet speaking of the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava.

## CHAPTER XIV

### APPOMATTOX

AS the winter wore away, the various injuries inflicted upon the railroads entering Richmond and Petersburg began to make themselves felt and it became difficult to supply the Confederate army. Among the expedients to which Lee had recourse was to haul supplies by wagon from Hicksford, far down on the Weldon railroad of which Grant held the upper end. In February Meade sent the cavalry under General Gregg, protected by the infantry-corps under General Warren, to break up this line of supply. Lee moved Hill's and Gordon's corps against the Union forces and, as was becoming customary, had the best of the ensuing engagement.

Feb. 20,  
1865

But a new factor was soon coming upon the scene. On February 20th Grant gave Sheridan his plans for the spring campaign:

As soon as it is possible to travel, I think you will have no difficulty about reaching Lynchburg with a cavalry force alone. From there you could destroy the railroad and canal in every direction, so as to be of no further use to the rebellion. . . . This additional raid, with one starting from East Tennessee under Stoneman, numbering about four or five thousand cavalry; one from Eastport, Mississippi, ten thousand cavalry; Canby, from Mobile Bay, with about eighteen thousand mixed troops—these three latter pushing for Tuscaloosa, Selma, and Montgomery: and Sherman with a large army eating out the vitals of South Carolina—is all that will be wanted to leave nothing for the rebellion to stand upon. I would advise you to overcome great obstacles to accomplish this. Charleston was evacuated on Tuesday last.<sup>1</sup>

During the winter Sheridan, whose intelligence service was the best developed during the war, had detected two

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, 278.

Confederate spies in his camp. Instead of arresting them, he concealed his discovery and used them to deceive Early as to his projected campaign. He allowed them to see ostensible preparations for a grand fox-hunt, which was in reality the mobilization for his campaign. Misled by their report, Early, who was at Waynesboro with only two brigades of infantry—for Gordon's corps had returned to Richmond, and the remainder of his force had been furloughed to their homes for the winter, an economy that had been successfully employed before Grant's time, but a fatal one now—failed to call for reinforcements or to summon his furloughed troops to the colors.

Brushing aside a small force under General Rosser at Mt. Crawford, Sheridan attacked and totally destroyed Early's little army at Waynesboro; Generals Early, Wharton, Long, Lilley, and Rosser escaped with a few men. From there he advanced on Charlottesville and, learning that Lynchburg had been reinforced, decided that it was impracticable to capture that city, and shortly afterwards came to the conclusion that he could not cross the James River.

March 2,  
1865

When we consider Sheridan's iron determination to have his own way, whether against the enemy or his own commander, we may well believe the wish was parent to the thought. As he so naïvely said,

Being thus unable to cross until the river should fall, and knowing that it was impracticable to join General Sherman, and useless to adhere to my alternative instructions to return to Winchester, I now decided to destroy still more thoroughly the James River canal and the Virginia Central railroad and then join General Grant in front of Petersburg. I was master of the whole country north of the James as far down as Goochland; hence the destruction of these arteries of supply could be easily compassed, and feeling that the war was nearing its end, I desired my cavalry to be in at the death.<sup>2</sup>

Writing forty years afterwards, General Forsythe, Sheridan's chief-of-staff, and his brother Michael both claimed

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan*, II, 119.

that Sheridan conceived the Appomattox campaign and decided to join Grant before he learned that the river was impassable. Said Forsythe:

“I shall begin this communication with a conversation that I had with General Sheridan when he received his instructions in the early part of February, 1865, in regard to the movements of his command.

“Upon receipt of General Grant’s communication giving him his orders, he opened it, read it, and then handed it to me to read. He was directed to move up the valley with his cavalry, clean up the remnant of Early’s forces located near Staunton, then move over into southern Virginia, destroy all railroads, and, if possible, the James River and Kanawha Canal. Having accomplished this, to cross the James River, break up the Southside railroad, then to move south and join Sherman in the Carolinas. After reading these instructions I said: ‘General, you are going to join Sherman?’ He said: ‘No.’ I said: ‘How are you going to get out of it? This order is positive and explicit.’ He said: ‘I am not going to join Sherman.’ I said: ‘Why?’ He said, in substance: ‘I’ll tell you why; this campaign will end the war. I have been anxious for fear Lee would commence moving west before we could get to Grant’s army. The Army of the Potomac will never move from its present position unless we join them and pull them out. The cavalry corps and the Army of the Potomac have got to whip Lee. If I obeyed these instructions and crossed the James and joined Sherman, the Army of the Potomac would rest where they are and Sherman, with our assistance, would close the war. If this should happen it would be disastrous to the country, for there would be no balance of power between the east and the west. This cavalry corps and the Army of the Potomac, of which it is a part, have got to wipe Lee out before Sherman and his army reach Virginia.’ ”<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, he so thoroughly wrecked the Virginia Central Railroad and the James River Canal that Lee could neither draw supplies from them nor retreat along them; and he advanced toward Richmond as far as the battlefield of Yellow Tavern, then doubled back and joined Grant via his old road through Trevillian Station, Hanover,

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, p. 397.

and White House, reaching the latter point on March 19th. Mar. 19,  
1865

It had been Grant's design for some time, as we have seen, to keep Lee's army in the fortress while he defeated all the other forces of the Confederacy in detail. He persisted in this intention after Sheridan joined him, and wrote to Sherman at Goldsboro:

Since Sheridan's very successful raid north of the James, the enemy are left dependent on the Southside and Danville roads for all their supplies. These I hope to cut next week. Sheridan is at "White House," shoeing up and resting his cavalry. I expect him to finish by Friday night and to start the following morning, *via* Long Bridge, Newmarket, Bermuda Hundred, and the extreme left of the army around Petersburg. He will make no halt with the armies operating here, but will be joined by a division of cavalry five thousand five hundred strong, from the Army of the Potomac, and will proceed directly to the Southside and Danville roads. His instructions will be to strike the Southside road as near Petersburg as he can, and destroy it so that it cannot be repaired for three or four days, and push on to the Danville road, as near to the Appomattox as he can get. Then I want him to destroy the road toward Burkesville as far as he can; then push on to the Southside road, west of Burkesville, and destroy it effectually. From that point I shall probably leave it to his discretion either to return to this army, crossing the Danville road south of Burkesville, or go and join you, passing between Danville and Greensboro'. When this movement commences I shall move out by my left, with all the force I can, holding present intrenched lines. *I shall start with no distinct view, further than holding Lee's forces from following Sheridan. But I shall be along myself, and will take advantage of any thing that turns up. If Lee detaches, I will attack; or if he comes out of his lines I will endeavor to repulse him, and follow it up to the best advantage.*<sup>4</sup> Mar. 22,  
1865

With the defeat of Hood at Nashville, the cause of the Confederacy had become desperate. With the loss of Fort Fisher, the last communication with the outside world was lost. Johnston had made a heroic, if puny, effort to defeat

<sup>4</sup> Grant to Sherman, March 22, 1865. *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, II, 323. Italics mine.

Sherman at Bentonville. When that failed, only one expedient remained—for Lee to slip away from Grant's grip at Petersburg, march through Danville, join Johnston, and overwhelm Sherman. It was to avoid this very contingency that Grant had made his elaborate preparations for Sherman to fall back upon the Wilmington base and the reinforcements of Schofield and Terry. This was why he inclined to reinforce Sherman's army with Sheridan's cavalry. He considered that his own army under his own command was strong enough to resist any effort that Lee could put forth.

Mar. 24,  
1865

It was probably to obtain a start in an attack upon Sherman that Lee assaulted Grant's lines on the night of the twenty-fourth of March, during which General Gordon occupied Fort Steadman for a short time but afterwards was driven back and lost his own picket line.

That same day General Grant issued his first orders for the campaign that was to result in the destruction or capture of the Army of Northern Virginia sixteen days later, which for simplicity, clarity, and completeness could well be used in schools for commanders-in-chief and chiefs-of-staff:











CITY POINT, VIRGINIA, March 24, 1865

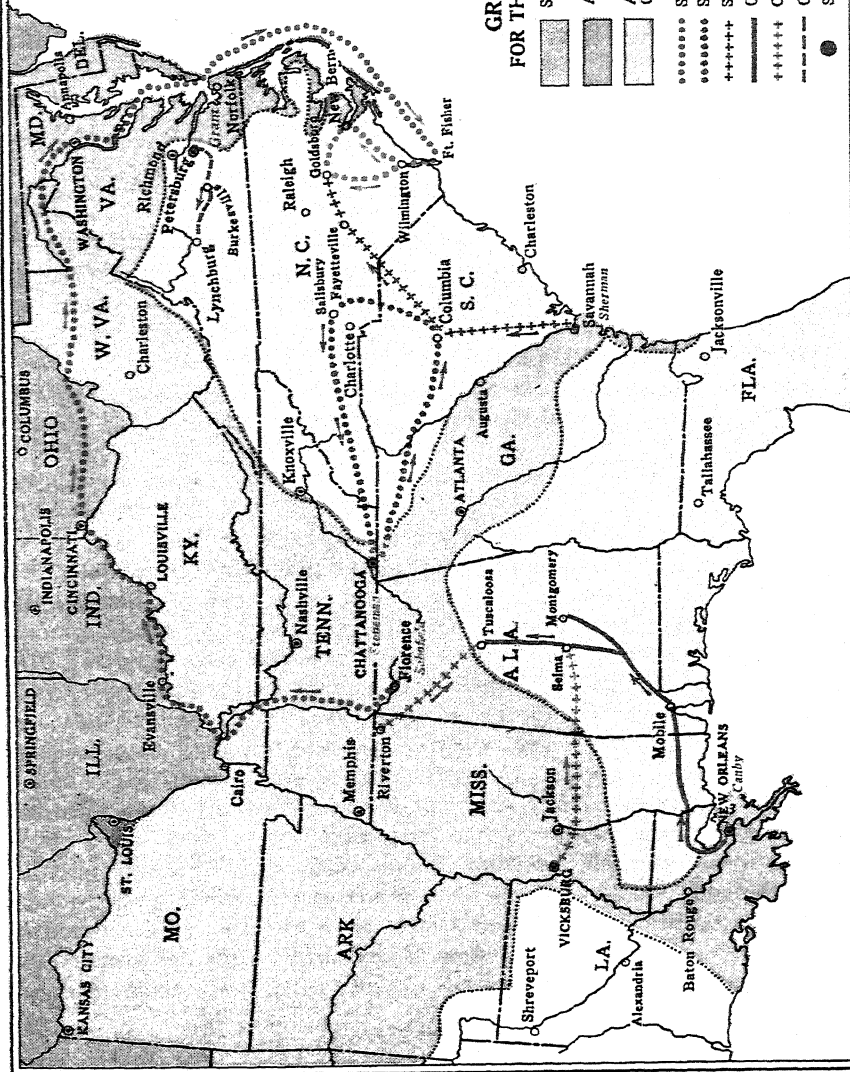
GENERAL: On the 29th instant the armies operating against Richmond will be moved by our left, for the double purpose of turning the enemy out of his present position around Petersburg, and to ensure the success of the cavalry under General Sheridan, which will start at the same time, in its efforts to reach and destroy the Southside and Danville railroads.

Two corps of the Army of the Potomac will be moved first, in two columns, taking the two roads crossing Hatcher's run nearest where the present line held by us strikes that stream, both moving towards Dinwiddie court-house.

The cavalry, under General Sheridan, joined by the division now under General Davies, will move at the same time, by the Weldon road and the Jerusalem plank-road, turning west from the latter before crossing the Nottoway, and west with the whole column before reaching Stony creek. General Sheridan will then move inde-

# GRANT'S PLANS FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF 1865

-  Southern Part of Free States at Beginning of War
-  Approximate Area Gained by Union Forces 1861-1864
-  Approximate Area Held by Confederates at the End of 1864
-  Schofield's Operations
-  Stoneman's Operations
-  Sherman's Operations
-  Canby's Operations
-  Operations of Detached Cavalry
-  Grant's (Sheridan's) Operations
-  Starting Point







pendently under other instructions, which will be given to him.

Major-General Parke will be left in command of all the army left for holding the lines about Petersburg and City Point, subject, of course, to orders from the commander of the Army of the Potomac. The Ninth army corps will be left intact to hold the present line of works, so long as the whole line now occupied by us is held. If, however, the troops to the left of the Ninth corps are withdrawn, then the left of the corps may be thrown back so *as to occupy the position held by the army prior to the capture of the Weldon road*. All troops to the left of the Ninth corps will be held in readiness to move at the shortest notice by such route as is designated when the order is given.

General Ord will detach three divisions, two white, and one colored, or so much of them as he can, and hold his present lines, and march for the present left of the Army of the Potomac.

All necessary preparations for carrying these directions into operation may be commenced at once. The reserves of the Ninth corps should be massed as much as possible. Whilst I would not now order an unconditional attack on the enemy's line by them, they should be ready, and should make the attack, if the enemy weakens his line in their front, without waiting for orders. In case they carry the line, then the whole of the Ninth corps could follow up so as to join or coöperate with the balance of the army. To prepare for this, the Ninth corps will have rations issued to them the same as to the balance of the army. General Weitzel (in front of Richmond) will keep vigilant watch upon his front, and if found at all practicable to break through at any point, he will do so. A success north of the James should be followed up with great promptness. An attack will not be feasible unless it is found that the enemy has detached largely. In that case, it may be regarded as evident that the enemy are relying upon their local reserves, principally, for the defense of Richmond. Preparations may be made for abandoning all the line north of the James, except enclosed works; only to be abandoned, however, after a break is made in the lines of the enemy.

By these instructions, a large part of the armies operating against Richmond is left behind. The enemy, knowing this, may, as an only chance, strip their lines to the merest skeleton, in the hope of advantage not being taken of it, whilst they hurl everything against the moving column, and return. It cannot be impressed too strongly upon commanders of troops left in the trenches, not to allow this to

occur without taking advantage of it. The very fact of the enemy coming out to attack, if he does so, might be regarded as conclusive evidence of such a weakening of his lines. I would have it particularly enjoined upon corps commanders, that in case of an attack from the enemy, those not attacked are not to wait for orders from the commanding officer of the army to which they belong, but that they will move promptly and notify the commander of their action. I wish, also, to enjoin the same action on the part of division commanders, when other parts of their corps are engaged. In like manner, I would urge the importance of following up a repulse of the enemy.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-Commander.*

MAJOR-GENERALS MEADE, ORD AND SHERIDAN.<sup>5</sup>

These orders disclose a plan to leave Parke with the Ninth Corps and Weitzel's force in front of the defenses, intrenched against attack and yet ready to escalate the defenses as soon as they were abandoned or fatally weakened. The rest of the army group—the Sixth, Second, and Fifth corps, Ord's command, and Sheridan's cavalry—were to cut loose from their base and strike for Lee's rear—the old, bold move.

Mar. 26,  
1865

On the twenty-sixth Sheridan came to City Point in advance of his troops and explained to his chief, somewhat uncomfortably, how he had again failed to carry out his orders—this time the orders to take Lynchburg and cross the James River. At first in reply Grant only praised Sheridan and his command, and then ordered him to do what he had failed to do—break the railroads west of Lee and join Sherman.

But when Sheridan protested and argued that he should remain with Grant and destroy Lee's army without Sherman's help, Grant told him that this was his plan and that he had so phrased his order that if the plan to destroy Lee should fail, Sheridan could go on to Sherman, and the failure would not be known. In passing, let it be said that

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Adam Badeau, *Military History of U. S. Grant*, III, 683–85.

such subtlety in order-writing was taught in the general-staff colleges of the World War.

Sherman arrived the next day from Goldsboro, and a conference was held at Grant's headquarters, attended by Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. The other army-commanders, Meade and Ord, were not present, nor was President Lincoln, who, accompanied by Mrs. Lincoln, was visiting the armies. Sherman expounded his plan to march north and, after meeting Sheridan, who would march south after cutting the railroads, occupy Burkesville and force Lee's capitulation. Sheridan again argued vigorously against the proposal that he join Sherman, and Grant sided with Sheridan, as always.

Sherman does not refer in his *Memoirs* to this serious meeting, but he becomes the first biographer of Mrs. Lincoln:

The day before my arrival at City Point, there had been a grand review of a part of the Army of the James, then commanded by General Ord. The President rode out from City Point with General Grant on horseback, accompanied by a numerous staff, including Captain Barnes and Mrs. Ord; but Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Grant had followed in a carriage.

The cavalcade reached the review-ground some five or six miles out from City Point, found the troops all ready, drawn up in line, and after the usual presentation of arms, the President and party, followed by Mrs. Ord and Captain Barnes, on horseback, rode the lines, and returned to the reviewing stand, which meantime had been reached by Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Grant in their carriage, which had been delayed by the driver taking a wrong road. Mrs. Lincoln, seeing Mrs. Ord and Captain Barnes riding with the retinue, and supposing that Mrs. Ord had personated her, turned on Captain Barnes and gave him a fearful scolding; and even indulged in some pretty sharp upbraidings to Mrs. Ord.<sup>6</sup>

Sheridan was at this review, but, wrapped up in his dreams of battle, he had no eyes for the lighter side. All he saw of the President's visit was:

<sup>6</sup> Sherman's *Memoirs*, III, 332.

On the trip the President was not very cheerful. In fact, he was dejected, giving no indication of his usual means of diversion, by which (his quaint stories) I had often heard he could find relief from his cares. He spoke to me of the impending operations and asked many questions, laying stress upon the one, "What would be the result when the army moved out to the left, if the enemy should come down and capture City Point?" the question being prompted, doubtless, by the bold assault on our lines and capture of Fort Steadman two days before by General Gordon. I answered that I did not think it at all probable that General Lee would undertake such a desperate measure to relieve the strait he was in; that General Hartranft's successful check to Gordon had ended, I thought, attacks of such a character; and in any event General Grant would give Lee all he could attend to on the left. Mr. Lincoln said nothing about my proposed route of march, and I doubt if he knew of my instructions, or was in possession at most of more than a very general outline of the plan of campaign.<sup>7</sup>

The next morning, before Sheridan was out of bed, Sherman called on his junior and again tried to bring him to his way of thinking, but unsuccessfully. The interests of the two generals were at variance. If Sherman could complete his long march with a great tactical victory, he might be hailed as the greatest general of all time. But Sheridan wanted to be the spear-head in the closing campaign and brilliant second to the generous commander-in-chief rather than the cavalry-commander of a jealous superior who did not understand cavalry and did not allow his subordinates either initiative or glory.

We have seen from previous correspondence that Grant had considered turning Lee out of his fortress and also investing him with Sherman's force. His order of March 24th provided for both alternatives. Grant was entirely unselfish. The plan to invest Lee was the safer of the two, but it was more his temperament to attack, and attack he did.

Promptly on the twenty-seventh, Ord's army left its trenches at Bermuda Hundred and marched to the left of the line, relieving the Fifth and Second corps. The latter

<sup>7</sup> Sheridan's *Memoirs*, II, 130-31.

troops then began the turning movement and, advancing on the Boydton Plank Road, reached the Quaker Road by night. Sheridan, passing by the rear of the infantry, got as far as Dinwiddie Court House, where he received welcome word from Grant, now at Gravelly Run, to abandon any thought of raiding the railroad or joining Sherman and to coöperate in the general battle Grant proposed to deliver.

It rained all that night, and the roads became quagmires. The next day showing no respite, the infantry-generals felt that they could not continue and induced Grant to halt the movement.

This led to an animated debate at headquarters. General Rawlins expressed the opinion around the camp-fire, on the morning of the 30th, that no forage could be hauled out to our cavalry; that Joe Johnston might come up in our rear if we remained long in our present position; that the success of turning Lee's right depended on our celerity; that now he had been given time to make his dispositions to thwart us; and that it might be better to fall back, and make a fresh start later on.<sup>8</sup>

Sheridan rode to headquarters and obtained permission for the cavalry to advance on Five Forks, but he was refused the reinforcement of the Sixth Corps for which he asked because it was far away, because of the mud, and because it was needed elsewhere. That night Grant learned that the cavalry in Sheridan's front was reinforced by Pickett's infantry, and he offered Sheridan the Fifth Corps, but Sheridan refused it.

Mar. 30,  
1865

Lee had learned of the movement as soon as it started, and met it as he had met similar movements during the preceding year. He attacked Warren with the infantry of Anderson, Heth, and Wilson on the morning of the thirty-first. Warren had been warned of his danger and told to concentrate his troops. Instead, he allowed Ayres to be caught alone and driven in upon Crawford, and the latter upon Griffin. Miles' division of the Second Corps was sent to the rescue, and after long delays the four divisions re-

Mar. 29,  
1865

Mar. 31,  
1865

<sup>8</sup> Horace Porter, *Campaigning with Grant*, pp. 427-28.

gained the lost ground, and some of their elements reached the White Oak Road, but the infantry of the Army of the Potomac was stopped there.

Against Sheridan, between Dinwiddie Court House and Five Forks, Lee sent W. H. F. Lee's, Rosser's, and Fitz-Hugh Lee's cavalry under Fitz-Hugh Lee, and five brigades of infantry under Pickett. Sheridan was driven back by the superior force, but manœvered his troops with consummate ability, avoiding any catastrophe to himself and preventing an attack on Warren's flank.

That evening Sheridan reported to Grant:

The enemy have gained some ground, but we still hold in front of Dinwiddie, and Davies and Devin are coming down the Boydton road to join us. . . . The men behaved splendidly. Our loss in killed and wounded will probably number four hundred and fifty men; very few were lost as prisoners. This force is too strong for us. I will hold out at Dinwiddie Court-House until I am compelled to leave.<sup>9</sup>

Colonel Horace Porter, who had been with Sheridan all day, reported the situation to his chief, and Captain Michael Sheridan brought a verbal message from General Sheridan to both Meade and Grant. The momentous fact was that Pickett, having failed to defeat Sheridan, was perilously situated between Sheridan's cavalry and the Fifth Corps. As this became apparent to Meade, he suggested that in addition to the division Grant had ordered to Sheridan's relief, the rest of the corps follow and surround Pickett, leaving Humphrey to hold the left of the line. Grant replied: "Let Warren move the way you propose and urge him not to stop for anything."<sup>10</sup>

To Sheridan, he wrote:

The Fifth Corps has been ordered to your support. Two divisions will go by J. Boisseau's and one down the Boydton road. In addition to this I have sent MacKenzie's cavalry, which will reach you by the Vaughan road. All these forces, except the cavalry, should reach

<sup>9</sup> Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 472.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 479.







you by twelve o'clock tonight. You will assume command of the whole force sent to operate with you, and use it to the best of your ability to destroy the force which your command has fought so gallantly today.<sup>11</sup>

Three o'clock in the morning came, and, no word of Warren having been received, Sheridan sent orders to him to advance at daylight directly upon the enemy from wherever he might be. But Pickett retreated from Sheridan's front at daylight and, although delayed by the pursuit of Custer and Devin, passed Warren's corps before it had been awakened in the morning. Warren, contrary to orders, had taken a night's sleep at this vital time. Ayres's division alone, which had marched down the Boydton Plank road all night pursuant to General Grant's order, followed the cavalry through Dinwiddie and up to Gravelly Run church.

Pickett, thanks to Warren, had backed out of the trap, but he was isolated at Five Forks and was constrained to hold it at all costs as a point vital to the escape of Lee's army from Petersburg. Sheridan decided to smash him in this position, advanced his cavalry against the front as a holding force, and ordered the Fifth Corps to attack Pickett's left flank. Ayres, who had been in the Sheridan atmosphere since morning, moved smartly forward, but the two divisions of the corps under Warren's immediate command came on the field with all the lethargy characteristic of that officer, formed slowly, and, in advancing, Crawford's division flinched to the right, opening a gap which caused the exposed flank of Ayres's men to waver.

In the crisis Warren could not be found, but General Griffin, the same General Griffin who had been outraged at Wright's and Warren's conduct in the Wilderness, perceived the danger and marched his troops into the gap. Ayres's infantrymen and Davies' cavalry dismounted, went over the breastworks together, and soon put the Confederate battle into complete rout.

Sheridan had received permission in the morning from

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 482-83.

Grant to relieve Warren. He now did so and put Griffin, who had shown great enterprise at the crisis of the battle, in command of the Fifth Corps. He then took a defensive position in anticipation of attack from Petersburg.

The victory of Five Forks, which brought a sudden end to the long siege, was the result of Sheridan's military skill and leadership. The circumstances under which it was fought were no more advantageous than those surrounding the half-dozen combats on that flank of Petersburg in which Wright, Hancock, Meade, and Warren had been worsted. So important is the personality of the officer upon whom the duty falls to carry out even the best of plans.

April 1,  
1865

Colonel Porter rode back from the victory of Five Forks through crowds of delirious men. He explains in his book, *Campaigning with Grant*, that he himself was so excited that on reaching headquarters he began shouting his glad tidings, clapped General Grant on the back, and behaved in such a way as to convey to such officers as were not similarly affected that he was drunk. Grant alone was unmoved.

Fearing that Lee would abandon his works, crush Sheridan, and retreat toward Danville, Grant ordered the artillery to bombard along the whole intrenched line all night, Parke's, Ord's, and Wright's troops to assault the defenses in the morning, and Miles's division to report to Sheridan.

Wright's corps first broke over the defenses west of Petersburg and opened the way for Ord's and Humphrey's troops, capturing prisoners and occupying the ground as far as the Appomattox River. Parke's corps carried the first line on the east of the city and, though it could go no farther, drew Longstreet's corps against it and thereby prevented that valuable body of troops from acting either against Wright or Sheridan.

Flushed with victory, the Army of the Potomac stormed Fort Gregg, and it was only Grant's calm that restrained the triumphant forces from attacking the citadel itself. His victorious army was south and west of Lee's. He preferred

to meet that army there in the open field, the condition he had sought for eleven long months.

Relieved by Grant's assault from the necessity of meeting any considerable part of Lee's army, Sheridan faced his command two ways. With his left flank he pushed Pickett's retreating forces to the west and to the north across the Appomattox. His right flank he drove against such reinforcements as Lee had sent from Petersburg to succor Pickett.

During that morning Miles was isolated in consequence of a conflict of authority between Meade and Sheridan over the command of his division. Miles's doggedness and success in eventually carrying the position of Sutherland's Depot in spite of this handicap obtained him later his appointment to the regular army and established him in the high regard of generals Grant and Sheridan which eventually made him commander-in-chief of the army of the United States.

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To intercept Lee's retreat, Grant sent the other divisions of the Second Corps to report to Sheridan, and told Sheridan that the *interception of Lee's army was his first objective* and that Burkesville Junction was his second.

The next morning he entered Petersburg with General Meade and was told by a man, representing himself as an engineer-officer, that General Lee had retreated into an intrenched camp west of Richmond. Grant was no more deceived by this ruse than he had been by Bragg at Chattanooga, but Meade was taken in and wished to march on the point designated. When Grant explained to him that Lee would not purposely place himself in a position where he could be bottled up, Meade persisted in his view and said that a march on this point would also be a pursuit of Lee; whereupon Grant explained to him that he did not intend to pursue Lee, *but to intercept him*.

Delayed in Petersburg by Grant's assaults, Lee could not order the evacuation of the two fortresses until the second of April, and consequently ordered his troops to concentrate at Amelia Court House on the fourth. He

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hoped, by one of the rapid marches that had made him famous, to anticipate Grant at that point and then, advancing toward his supplies, to retreat successfully to Danville, for he knew Grant could not pursue him far from his base at City Point without supplies, and that wagons could not be drawn through the muddy roads as fast as the retreating infantry could march.

But Grant had anticipated Lee's plan and had sent Sheridan in advance of Lee with the cavalry and the Fifth and Second corps. He now ordered Meade to take the Sixth Corps and follow Sheridan along the main road, while he ordered Parke to march along the Boydton Plank Road and repair the South Side railroad where it had been damaged, in order to bring supplies to his army. He had Sheridan west of Lee and always kept one army-corps across every road that Lee might take to slip past Sheridan's rear to the south.

Sheridan was in full sympathy with Grant's plan and moved in its execution with all his fiery energy. Striking the Danville railroad at Jetersville ahead of all his troops, he put his escort in line of battle across Lee's retreat and by this means captured a messenger carrying a despatch which was to have been telegraphed from Burkesville to Danville, ordering supplies for Lee's army.

The Fifth Corps now came up, and the cavalry, and then Meade in person. Meade being ill, he asked Sheridan to place the Second Corps and the Sixth Corps, now arriving, in position. While making these dispositions, Sheridan sent a brigade of his cavalry to reconnoiter to the north and, learning that Lee was prepared to move in that direction, asked Meade's permission to attack as soon as the Second Corps was up. Meade refused to depart from his predetermined plan to await the Sixth Corps and then attack from the right flank, and Sheridan sent Grant the following memorable despatch:

I send you the enclosed letter, which will give you an idea of the condition of the enemy and their whereabouts. I sent General Davis's

brigade this morning around on my left flank. He captured at Paine's crossroads five pieces of artillery, about two hundred wagons, and eight or nine battle flags, and a number of prisoners. The Second army corps is now coming up. *I wish you were here yourself.* I feel confident of capturing the Army of Northern Virginia, if we exert ourselves. I see no escape for Lee. I will put all my cavalry out on our left flank, except Mackenzie, who is on the right.<sup>12</sup>

On receiving this message, Grant started immediately from Ord's command and after a hard and dangerous ride arrived late in the evening at Sheridan's headquarters. From there he went to see Meade; again tried to impress upon him that his object *was to cut off*, not to pursue, Lee; and ordered Meade to advance at daylight the next morning, not from his right flank, but from his left, but remarked that he was sure Lee was already moving.

Marching all night, Lee passed Meade's army to the north and took the road toward Danville. Thanks to his speed and Meade's incurable slowness, he was in advance for the first time since leaving Petersburg and was retreating toward Johnston. But not for long. Sheridan had not accompanied Meade on his attack against Lee's empty camps.

Riding along the left of Lee's army, he interposed his whole force between Longstreet in advance and Ewell in the center of the Confederate column. A brigade of his cavalry got in behind Ewell and in front of Gordon and compelled the latter, who was followed by the Second Corps, to turn toward Farmville. Sheridan brought up the Sixth Corps and in the severe battle of Sailor's Creek destroyed Ewell's corps, capturing him and five other generals.

Longstreet now abandoned his retreat toward Danville, and Lee's remaining force headed for Lynchburg.

Grant, of course, knew from the large number of prisoners captured at Five Forks, Petersburg, and Sailor's Creek, from the many dead and wounded left on those battle-fields, and from reports of men straggling from Lee's

<sup>12</sup> Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 561.

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1865

command that Lee's army was in its death-throes. Accordingly, on the seventh he wrote to Lee asking for the surrender of his army:

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE U. S.,  
5 P. M., Apr. 7, 1865

GENERAL R. E. LEE,

*Commanding Confederate States Armies:*

The result of last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate Southern Army, known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-General.*<sup>13</sup>

Lee replied:

Apr. 7, 1865

General: I have received your note of this day. Though not entirely of the opinion you express of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and therefore before considering your proposition ask the terms you will offer on condition of the surrender.

R. E. LEE, *General.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT,

*Commanding Armies of the U. S.*<sup>14</sup>

Grant responded:

Apr. 8, 1865.

GENERAL R. E. LEE,

*Commanding Confederate States Armies:*

Your note of last evening in reply to mine of the same date asking the conditions on which I will accept the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia is just received. In reply I would say that peace being my first desire there is but one condition that I insist upon, viz: That the men surrendered shall be disqualified for taking up

<sup>13</sup> J. G. Wilson, *General Grant*, p. 280.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

arms again against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged. I will meet you or designate officers to meet any officers you may name for the purpose at any point agreeable to you for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia will be received.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-General.*<sup>15</sup>

Lee tried to turn this into a negotiation for peace:

Apr. 8, 1865.

General: I received at a late hour your note of today in answer to mine of yesterday. I did not intend to propose the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, but to ask the terms of your proposition. To be frank, I do not think the emergency has arisen to call for the surrender. But as the restoration of peace should be the sole object of all, I desire to know whether your proposals would tend to that end. I can not therefore meet you with a view to surrender the Army of the Northern Virginia; but so far as your proposition may affect the Confederate States forces under my command and tend to the restoration of peace, I should be pleased to meet you at 10 A.M. tomorrow on the old stage road to Richmond between the picket lines of the two armies.

R. E. LEE, *Genl. C. S. A.*

LIEUT.-GEN. U. S. GRANT,  
*Comdg. Armies of the U. S.*<sup>16</sup>

But Grant declined to enlarge the subject of correspondence:

Apr. 9, 1865.

GENERAL R. E. LEE:

General—Your note of yesterday is received. As I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace, the meeting proposed for 10 A.M. today could lead to no good. I will state, however, general, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself, and the whole North entertain the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood. By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed. Sincerely

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 281–82.

hoping that all our difficulties may be settled without the loss of another life, I subscribe myself, etc.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-General.*<sup>17</sup>

Once more Sheridan rode parallel to the retreating force, passed it, stopped it with the aid of Ord's corps, and, the Army of the Potomac coming up in the rear, compelled Lee to surrender. Lee again asked for an interview:

GENERAL: I received your note of this morning on the picket line, whither I had come to meet you and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now ask an interview, in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday, for that purpose.

R. E. LEE, *Gen'l. C. S. A.*

LIEUT.-GEN. U. S. GRANT,  
*Comdg. Armies of the U. S. A.*<sup>18</sup>

Three hundred and forty-four days had elapsed since Grant had crossed the Rapidan. His seven-day campaign from Petersburg to Appomattox ranks with his sixteen days from Port Gibson to Vicksburg. His instantaneous conception of the opportunity offered by the successful storming of the Petersburg defenses, his immediate assignment of troops to Sheridan to intercept Lee's retreat, his handling of the large units of his command so as to block all avenues of escape, and his relentless driving of his generals and troops transcends Napoleon's classic pursuit of the Prussian armies after Jena-Auerstadt.

Many descriptions of the surrender have been written, some of them embellished, but none have improved Grant's own words:

When I had left camp that morning I had not expected so soon the result that was then taking place, and consequently was in rough garb. I was without a sword, as I usually was when on horseback in the field, and wore a soldier's blouse for a coat, with the shoulder-straps of my rank to indicate to the army who I was. When I went

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>18</sup> William C. Church, *Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 318.







into the house I found General Lee. We greeted each other, and after shaking hands took our seats. I had my staff with me, a good portion of whom were in the room during the whole of the interview.

What General Lee's feelings were I do not know. As he was a man of much dignity, with an impassible face, it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result, and was too manly to show it. Whatever his feelings, they were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse. I do not question, however, the sincerity of the great mass of those who were opposed to us.

General Lee was dressed in a full uniform which was entirely new, and was wearing a sword of considerable value, very likely the sword which had been presented by the State of Virginia; at all events, it was an entirely different sword from the one that would ordinarily be worn in the field. In my rough traveling-suit, the uniform of a private with the straps of a lieutenant-general, I must have contrasted very strangely with a man so handsomely dressed, six feet high and of faultless form. But this was not a matter that I thought of until afterward.

We soon fell into a conversation about old army times. He remarked that he remembered me very well in the old army; and I told him that as a matter of course I remembered him perfectly, but from the difference in our rank and years (there being about sixteen years' difference in our ages) I had thought it very likely that I had not attracted his attention sufficiently to be remembered by him after such a long interval. Our conversation grew so pleasant that I almost forgot the object of our meeting. After the conversation had run on in this style for some time, General Lee called my attention to the object of our meeting, and said that he had asked for this interview for the purpose of getting from me the terms I proposed to give his army. I said that I meant merely that his army should lay down their arms, not to take them up again during the continuance of the war unless duly and properly exchanged. He said that he had so understood my letter.

Then we gradually fell off again into conversation about matters

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Then we gradually fell off again into conversation about matters

cers, he remarked, with some feeling, I thought, that this would have a happy effect upon his army.

Then, after a little further conversation, General Lee remarked to me again that their army was organized a little differently from the army of the United States (still maintaining by implication that we were two countries); that in their army the cavalymen and artilerists owned their own horses; and he asked if he was to understand that the men who so owned their horses were to be permitted to retain them. I told him that as the terms were written they would not; that only the officers were permitted to take their private property. He then, after reading over the terms a second time, remarked that that was clear.

I then said to him that I thought this would be about the last battle of the war—I sincerely hoped so; and I said, further, I took it that most of the men in the ranks were small farmers. The whole country had been so raided by the two armies that it was doubtful whether they would be able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter without the aid of the horses they were then riding. The United States did not want them, and I would therefore instruct the officers I left behind to receive the paroles of his troops to let every man of the Confederate army who claimed to own a horse or mule take the animal to his home. Lee remarked again that this would have a happy effect.

He then sat down and wrote out the following letter:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,  
April 9, 1865.

GENERAL: I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect.

R. E. LEE,  
*General.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

. . . General Lee, after all was completed and before taking his leave, remarked that his army was in a very bad condition for want of food, and that they were without forage; that his men had been living for some days on parched corn exclusively, and that he would have to ask me for rations and forage. I told him "Certainly," and

asked for how many men he wanted rations. His answer was "About twenty-five thousand."<sup>19</sup>

Of the army- and corps-commanders who started the campaign with Grant, only Sheridan was at the surrender. Sedgwick had been killed. Sigel, Hunter, Gillmore, Smith, Butler, Burnside, Averell, Torbert, and Warren had been removed. Hancock had left on sick-leave, and Meade had forfeited his chance at Jetersville.<sup>20</sup>

Grant did not require a public surrender of this, the third army he had captured during the war, but allowed it peacefully to disband. He forbade his own army to fire a salute in celebration of its victory. His meetings with Lee and other generals the next day were informal and friendly. In order not further to hurt the feelings of the fallen foe, when he returned to City Point he did not visit Richmond, the sixth fort<sup>21</sup> he had taken in person, the tenth<sup>22</sup> captured by troops under his command.

Since finishing my manuscript I have received from my friend Orville C. Babcock of Chicago the following account of the surrender written by his father, Colonel O. E. Babcock:

About Eleven A. M. of the day of the surrender, while General Grant with staff were moving from the extreme left of our Army, General Meade's headquarters, to our extreme left, General Sheridan's Headquarters, he was overtaken by an officer of General Meade's staff, Major ———, bearing a sealed letter from General Lee to General Grant. General Grant after reading the letter turned aside from the road into an adjoining field, dismounted, told us of the contents of the letter, called for writing material and immediately wrote a reply as follows:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, II, 341-46.

<sup>20</sup> None of these generals, German or American, amateur or professional, commanded at the final scene. See Chapter VIII.

<sup>21</sup> Paducah, Henry, Heiman, Donelson, Vicksburg, and Richmond-Petersburg captured by the army under Grant's immediate command.

<sup>22</sup> Atlanta, Savannah, Fort Fisher, and Charleston captured by armies led by Grant's subordinates.

<sup>23</sup> Colonel Babcock's account is reproduced exactly as he wrote it. Grant's reply is not recorded by him.

After reading the same to see that it expressed his ideas, he turned to Colonel Babcock, one of his aide-de-camp, and told him to take it to General Lee, going by General Sheridan's headquarters—the exact locality of which was not then known to General Grant. The instructions to Colonel Babcock were to take the letter to General Lee, arrange with him some place to meet General Grant, to take an officer with him to send back to meet General Grant and conduct him to the place selected. Colonel Babcock asked Captain W. M. Danne, Jr., acting A. D. C., to accompany him. Colonel Babcock rode forward rapidly; meeting by chance the headquarters train, he secured fresh horses for himself and his orderly. On reaching Appomattox Court House, Colonel Babcock found General Sheridan pacing backward and forward in front of his temporary headquarters. General Sheridan said at once in emphatic language that he believed the truce was a game, that they were playing to get time to escape. Colonel Babcock informed him that General Lee had promised to surrender, that he had a letter to Lee, and was authorized to select a place for the meeting for that purpose. General Sheridan seemed disappointed, said "Damn them, I wish they had held out one hour longer and I would have whipped Hell out of them." General Sheridan at once directed Colonel J. W. Forsyth to accompany Colonel Babcock to General Lee. General Forsyth taking from his pocket a white handkerchief used it as a flag of truce, as they passed over the brow of the hill and within the picket lines of the Rebel Army, at which point they were met by Rebel Officers, who conducted them to their Chief, General Lee, turning off from the main road into a plantation. General Lee was found sitting under an apple tree. The farm road from the main wood to the plantation buildings passed near this tree, the wheels had cut away the dirt from the roots of the tree on one side, forming a convenient bench for a seat. General Lee was surrounded by a number of his Officers. On arrival of the two Officers, General Lee rose. Colonel Babcock introduced himself, presented the letter from General Grant. After General Lee had read it, Colonel Babcock informed him what his verbal instructions were as to selection of place, etc. Colonel Babcock asked him also, whether he had any requests as to number of Officers who should meet him, or any special requests as to the meeting. General Lee replied No, that he would take one officer and an orderly with him, but remarked that General Meade had granted him a truce, until two (2) P. M.,

that as their meeting might not be over by that time, asked Colonel Babcock if he could arrange to have the time continued until the termination of the meeting. Colonel Babcock said he could, and then wrote a note to General Meade, as follows:

I am with Genl. Lee for purpose of conducting him to an interview with Genl. Grant on the matter of his surrender. Will you please maintain the truce, until you hear from Genl. Grant.

Colonel Babcock read the note to General Lee, who volunteered to send it through his own lines, in fact sent an Officer with Colonel Forsyth to bear the note. The distance through the Rebel Army was not to exceed two (2) miles, while around the Union Lines would have been from ten to twelve. On completion of this, General Lee mounted and rode with Colonel Babcock towards Appomattox Court House. They went first to a farmhouse to the left of the wood; as they approached the Court House, found it locked and nailed up. Meeting a citizen, Mr. McLean,<sup>24</sup> he conducted them to his own residence somewhat nearer the Court House. This house was occupied, was warmed and comfortable. Colonel Babcock sent word at once to General Sheridan's headquarters, to notify General Grant so soon as he should arrive at the place selected for the meeting. A short time after they had reached the McLean house, General Grant came up, accompanied by General Rawlins, Chief of Staff, General E. O. C. Ord and General J. G. Barnard. Colonel Babcock observing through the window the approach of General Grant, informed General Lee, and opened the door for General Grant. On entering the room the two Generals passed the usual salutations of recognition, and conversed a few moments relative to their having met in Mexico, during the Mexican War. When General Lee said he had desired to meet General Grant on the matter of terms of surrender of his Army, General Grant asked in what especial respect. General Lee said as to enlisted men. General Grant replied, he proposed to parole the men, the Officers signing the parole for the men, the men to go to their own homes, and obey the laws at their homes, and not to take up arms against the United States again until duly exchanged according to the cartel. These liberal terms seemed to surprise General Lee, and to lift a weight from his mind. He remarked, how about the Officers. General Grant said, I propose to accept their parole also, and on the same terms. General Lee then continued the

<sup>24</sup> McLean owned the farm on which the Battle of Bull Run was fought.



conversation in general a few moments, when General Grant interrupted him by asking him the businesslike question,—General Lee, do I understand you to accept my terms? General Lee replied, I do, when General Grant called for writing materials, remarking that he would put it in writing. At this point, having procured writing material, Colonel Babcock invited in Colonels Porter, Badeau, Parker, Dent, Captain Hudson and other members of General Grant's staff, then with him, Generals Sheridan, Custer and others, most of whom were presented to General Lee, Colonel Babcock having asked him whether he had any objections, and received assurance that he had none.

When General Grant put his terms into writing he included the portion allowing the Officers to retain their side arms, personal baggage and one horse, where the horse was the private property of the Officer.

On presenting the written terms, General Lee observed the increased magnanimity and liberality, and at once, with unconcealed feeling expressed his thanks and observed, that they would have a very happy effect upon his Army, and then called General Grant's attention to the fact, that, unlike the Union Soldier many of the Cavalry and Artillery soldiers of his Army owned their horses,—how about them. General Grant replied they became according to the terms of the surrender, the property of the Government. General Lee referred to the written terms, and after a moment said,—yes, they are included. Then General Grant said to General Lee that he considered this the end of the War, that these men are very poor and without animals could do but little towards raising a crop for the coming winter, that the animals would be of but little value to the Government and while he could not include the conditions in the terms of surrender, he would instruct the Officer detailed to receive the surrender to allow the enlisted man owning his horse to retain it.

While these papers were being copied, General Lee made some requests as to turning over to General Grant a number of Union prisoners held by his Army, and expressed regret that he had not been able to better provide for their needs. He also asked for rations for his own men. General Grant at once gave the necessary orders in each case. The papers were then signed virtually ending the active rebellion—the two Generals separated with the usual salutations, and Colonel Babcock conducted General Lee to within his own lines,

leaving him near the apple tree under which he had found him a few hours before.

Colonel Babcock stated that he found General Lee very dignified, apparently depressed in spirit, but agreeable and pleasant in conversation, making inquiry after many of the personal friends he had left in the regular Army, expressing regret to hear the death of some of them. His conduct impressed him as that of a man who believed he had done his duty, to the best of his ability, and though failing he submitted to fate calmly and resignedly.

NOTE. When General Lee asked General Grant for rations, he gave as a reason that supplies sent for him, from Lynchburg, had not reached him. General Grant turned to General Sheridan, and asked him if his trains were up, so that he could give General Lee some rations. General Sheridan replied, No, his trains were not up, but that he had a part of a train of cars loaded with supplies, that he had captured which he could give General Lee, and did send them. The supplies were those sent for General Lee from Lynchburg, they had been captured by Sheridan. Lee had surrendered, but actually received the supplies sent for him a few hours before from Lynchburg.

I have heard the foregoing read and can say that it conforms to my recollection of the events related to.

U. S. GRANT.

Feb. 10, 1877.

In capturing Lee's army Grant had brought the war to an end. The other armies with the exception of Johnston's were all surrendered on the same terms.

The Appomattox campaign had left an anticlimax for Sherman. He had marched away from the Battle of Nashville and had not come up to the foe in Virginia. His accomplishments had been against the unarmed inhabitants, whom he had ruined. What more natural than that he should wish to close his career with a deed of generosity to endear him to those he had injured and an act of statesmanship, as he had baptized his retreat from Atlanta. There seems no other way to account for this self-styled professional soldier turning politician in his final moment. Although he had

Grant's terms of surrender to Lee before him—the terms of one commander-in-chief to another commander-in-chief—Sherman the subordinate signed, not a capitulation between generals, but a treaty of peace with another subordinate—subject to confirmation, to be sure.

His action drove official Washington, bereaved of its leader and its judgment by the assassination of Lincoln, into frenzy. Sherman was suspected of treason, even of intending to set up a military dictatorship, was bitterly attacked by Stanton and Halleck, and finished the war as he began it, under a cloud.

Grant alone maintained his imperturbable calm and saved both Sherman and the situation. Exercising his powers of lieutenant-general, he continued Sherman in his command, went to Sherman's headquarters, and waited there so quietly while Sherman carried out his instructions to change the peace-treaty into a simple surrender that neither army knew of his presence.

The clamor now extended further. Grant's convention with Lee was repudiated in President Johnson's proclamation of amnesty. General Lee was indicted for treason by a packed grand jury.

This time Grant interested himself in behalf of his former foe. To Johnson he wrote:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES,  
June 16, 1865.

In my opinion, the officers and men paroled at Appomattox Court House, and since, upon the same terms given to Lee, cannot be tried for treason so long as they observe the terms of their parole. This is my understanding. Good faith, as well as true policy dictates that we should observe the conditions of that convention. Bad faith on the part of the government, or a construction of that convention subjecting officers to trial for treason, would produce a feeling of insecurity in the minds of all the paroled officers and men. If so disposed, they might even regard such an infraction of terms by the government as an entire release from all obligations on their part. I will state further, that the terms granted by me met with the

hearty approval of the President at the time, and of the country generally. The action of Judge Underwood, in Norfolk, has already had an injurious effect, and I would ask that he be ordered to quash all indictments found against paroled prisoners of war, and to desist from further persecution of them.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant-General.*<sup>25</sup>

The indictment was dropped.

Grant had solved the problem of the war. Let us leave him in his hour of victory and earned retirement before he knew that the crime which gave to President Lincoln the crown of martyrdom would lay upon his own tired shoulders the problems of peace.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from Badeau, *op. cit.*, III, 639, appendix.

## CHAPTER XV

### RÉSUMÉ

GENERAL LEE, it seems to me, rose to sublime heights in his last year as a soldier. Untaxed by his other opponents, he was not compelled to develop his full genius. Against Grant's herculean blows he demonstrated all the resources open to a master of war. Faced by a new paladin, he never discouraged his followers by admitting Grant's ability, nor did he open himself to the charge of false prophecy by deriding the qualities of this foe.

He acted on accepted military principles at Culpeper when he told his corps-commanders that he expected Grant to advance by his right flank, after he had based his greatest strength on the left, for it is axiomatic that a commander must make it appear to his subordinates that he had anticipated the unexpected contingency. It was in just this spirit that Grant announced in 1865 that Sheridan was to join Sherman when he intended to use him to attack Lee.

In assaulting Grant in the Wilderness with all that fury of which he was capable, he not only used the manœuvre in which he had perfected himself and his army on territory favorable for such action, known to him and unknown to Grant, but he precipitated the crisis before Grant and the Army of the Potomac had time to know each other, taking advantage of a situation described by Wilson:

It is hereby worthy of note, however, that Rawlins, Bowers, Sheridan, Dana, and I were the only officers of high rank in that vast host who had ever been with Grant in battle, and that it was no part of his plan to fight in the dense and almost impenetrable woods of the Wilderness, if he could help it. He was surrounded, as it were, by strangers who were more or less incredulous as to his real capacity as a general, and believed that he had succeeded hitherto by good

fortune rather than by good management. As shown by Rawlins's letter of May 2, these critics did not conceal their apprehension that Lee would prove to be too much for Grant. This feeling was widespread and undisguised. It was evidently shared by many of the rank and file as well as by several generals commanding corps and divisions, and doubtless did much towards making the movements of the Union army more cautious and more deliberate than they should have been. As it was, they were inexcusably slow.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, in that action Lee defeated the Army of the Potomac and its generals, though he could not defeat the indomitable commander-in-chief.

After his failure against Grant in the Wilderness, Lee rose above the example of Napoleon. That great general of battles had only one alternative to victory in battle—defeat in battle. Lee found another expedient. On the night of the seventh of May, 1864, he recognized that his old slashing tactics which had brought him victory every time he had employed them in Virginia could not prevail against Grant. He thereafter stood upon a safe and stubborn defensive, using intrenchments to supplement his inferior numbers and, excepting the first two days at Spottsylvania, maintaining an unbroken front all the way to the Chickahominy.

That Grant outgeneraled him there is evidence of Grant's genius rather than of Lee's failure, for Grant was employing a new tactical manœuvre he had created—using water obstacles as highways against a man whose whole experience had been upon dry ground.

It has been said that Lee was saved by Beauregard at Petersburg. It may be said with equal truth that his subordinate generals were much superior to Grant's column-commanders in the Army of the Potomac. This is a tribute to Lee, who selected and trained his generals, and not a criticism of Grant, who had to take generals commissioned under the restrictions of an established bureaucracy.

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins*, p. 211.

It is an inherent advantage of every revolutionary movement that its leaders, selected in the open field, of vital necessity, are superior to the generals of the established government selected according to regulations framed by office-holders to protect commonplace individuals from the competition of exceptional ones. Against this advantage, revolution suffers from a lack of organization as well as a lack of resources. The former of these defects General Fuller attributes mistakenly to a shortcoming in Lee's intellectual equipment. It was the solider organization of the Army of the Potomac which enabled it to survive the brilliancy of the Confederate tactics in the early days of the war and which enabled Grant, even with inferior army- and corps-commanders, to push the Army of Northern Virginia relentlessly to its doom.

Once within the fortifications of Richmond-Petersburg, Lee enjoyed all the advantages of the besieged. His active troops were comfortably housed and easily supplied. The entire population became adjuncts of his army, and that part of the male population unsuited for battle in the open field were scarcely less effective than the regular army in defense of strong intrenchments. There was, however, the complementary disadvantage that the army became a garrison, which, once forced out of its works, dissolved<sup>2</sup> and disbanded.

Lee not only maintained himself in Richmond throughout the summer and winter of 1864, but he drove the Union armies from the Shenandoah Valley for most of that summer, frightened Washington, and compelled such heavy detachments of troops as to prevent formidable siege operations. He also forced the recall of the Nineteenth Corps from the Gulf Coast, where it might have been used in aggressive action against the Confederacy.

Indeed, it is fair to say that by his attack on Washington, Lee had beaten the entire military hierarchy of the Union

<sup>2</sup> Lee's expression.

—Lincoln, Stanton, and Halleck. Again it was only Grant's iron determination to carry out the campaign as planned that stood between Lee and victory.

If we look at the spring campaign only from the night of March 31st, we may join the critics of Lee who claim he should have evacuated Richmond before that day. But he saw no reason to expect overwhelming defeat at Five Forks to result from the dispositions he made to repulse this last attack on his right flank—dispositions so similar to those that had been successful the previous summer. In four years of warfare no part of Lee's force had ever been completely overthrown by any fragment of the Army of the Potomac. Indeed, he was only defeated now by one factor—the extraordinary battle power of Sheridan.

Certain it is that no other general in Grant's armies could have fought the successful delaying action of Dinwiddie Court House. No other general in Grant's army could have taken the divisions of Warren's corps, straggling and wavering, and forced them over the barricades of Five Forks. The result was attained by Grant finding the right man for the critical movement.

Subject to the alternative of peace or of capitulation, the only sensible course open to Lee was to remain as long as possible in his fortifications. Once out of them, he lost more than one-half of his combatant power.

When his right flank was turned, and when Grant stormed his intrenchments west of the Petersburg Citadel, flight, not retreat, was necessary. Fuller to the contrary, his fleeing forces could not afford to encumber themselves with rations for a campaign. It was a foot-race between him and Grant to reach Burkesville Junction. If he could be there first, provisions would be forthcoming. If he could not arrive ahead of Grant, all the rations in Richmond would not avail him.

In retrospect we may say that the war was prolonged far more than was reasonable. General Ewell thought that all hope of resistance was gone after Grant crossed the James



River. After that, prop after prop fell—the Shenandoah, Atlanta, Hood's army, Fort Fisher, and Wilmington. But war is not begun or carried on in the realm of pure reason, but in passion and racial instinct. Though not successful, Lee's spirit was that of Washington, and in no whit different from the spirit of Grant.

Let us now recapitulate Grant's unequalled career.

As a colonel, he marched directly upon his first opponent and drove him without a battle. The day after he arrived at Cairo, a brigadier-general of volunteers, to anticipate the enemy he seized the strategic points of Paducah and Smithland in neutral Kentucky without waiting or asking for orders, and obtained control over the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. At Belmont he struck the enemy, dominated the battle-field, and inspired his army.

After obtaining permission to attack Fort Henry, he captured it, then immediately marched upon great Fort Donelson in the midst of the enemy armies three times greater than his. There the accidents of battle went much against him. The fleet was defeated, and his right wing was thrown into confusion. Unterrified and with a judgment bordering on inspiration, he captured the fortress by the assault of his left wing and pushed his advance into Nashville before he was recalled by jealous superiors.

At Shiloh he came to an army divided by the river and concentrated it toward the front. He sought permission to advance against the enemy, was refused, and was compelled to remain in his exposed position until he was attacked. Again his determination and great battle command saved the situation and won a battle comparable to Waterloo or Cedar Creek.

At Iuka and at Corinth he handled his troops in bold, converging attacks with all the skill and fearlessness with which a war-college professor at a lecture handles his chalk.

Forced by the intrigue of Halleck and the quarrel of Sherman with McClernand to concentrate his army on the west bank of the Mississippi, with that great obstacle be-

tween him and his objective, he used it to embark upon the perilous masterpiece of strategy and tactics below Vicksburg which extricated his army and captured the fort, but only after exhausting the possibilities of the conservative and safe alternatives.

After that great victory he was called to rescue an army defeated, besieged, and starved in Chattanooga, and immediately carried out the desperate expedient which his predecessors in command had visualized but had not dared to put into effect. He supplied this army, freed it from encirclement, and delivered a battle from both wings so perfectly conceived that the ineffective performances of both flank-commanders could not prevent him from forcing it to complete victory. He would have led his triumphant army into Atlanta upon the heels of its panic-stricken opponent if he had not been diverted by President Lincoln to raise the blockade of Burnside at Knoxville.

Once risen to supreme command by the most brilliant manœuvres, this man of fire, no longer compelled to use dangerous expedients to retrieve the faults of others, formulated an entirely new scheme of warfare in which he directed all the armies to a common end along a front of a thousand miles—a sure plan of campaign which, under his iron hand, afforded opportunities for quick victory but left no loopholes for catastrophe.

To his great responsibilities as commander-in-chief he added the direction of his center army. He met Lee in the latter's chosen labyrinth of the Wilderness and there fought the terrible battle of that name. At its close, like Lee, he changed his tactics. Observing how his oft-beaten corps had wavered before Lee's dashing onslaughts, Grant decided never to let Lee manœuvre again. The result of this decision was the intense Battle of Spottsylvania. If it failed of decisive victory, it left the Army of Virginia incapable of offensive operations. Thereafter at North Anna, the Totopotomoy, and Cold Harbor he gave it no chance to recuperate. At Cold Harbor his attack was repulsed, but it

kept the enemy close in their trenches while Grant moved his army to Petersburg.

With this movement a new tactical situation presented itself. The army became so widespread that Grant could no longer accompany the striking force. He tried all his column-commanders in turn—Smith, Meade, Hancock, Warren, and Butler. They all failed him. He sent Wright to Washington, and Wright failed. Then came Sheridan and victory in the valley. Ord won at Fort Harrison, but fell in the moment of success. Terry rose to the front rank with the capture of Fort Fisher.

After he penned the Army of Virginia in the fort of Richmond-Petersburg, he held it there by attacks which also served to advance and extend his lines while he “gathered everything else into his hands.”<sup>3</sup> In the campaign under his immediate command he created four opportunities to achieve decisive victory—in the Wilderness, at Spottsylvania, at the surprise of Petersburg, and at the exploding of the mine. They were lost by his subordinates.

When his only outstanding lieutenants holding independent commands—Sherman and Sheridan—felt themselves unable to carry out his orders, Grant allowed them to go on to victory under conditions of their own choosing, therein showing a mentality that towers above Napoleon, who forced upon his subordinates plans of campaign that the men on the spot could not carry out.

Then came his lightning-stroke to complete victory at Appomattox, as at Donelson, Nashville, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga.

At Five Forks, Sheridan performed the task that had been beyond Smith, Meade, Hancock, Warren, and Butler. Meade failed again at Amelia Court House, but Ord, recovered from his wounds, marched to Sheridan at Appomattox. There the two Grant Men finally compelled Lee's surrender.

Comparisons between opposing generals, almost never

<sup>3</sup> Grant to Sherman.

made without the bias of loyalty, frequently descend to the plane of special pleading and to unfair disparagement. Comparisons of Grant with Lee have fallen in this category. Grant and Lee were not set opposite one another, like chess-players with identical tools. Grant commanded the armies of a nation; Lee, a field-force. Each did his work with genius. Lee did all that was possible to defeat Grant. It is no detraction from Lee to show that Grant presented to him situations that could not be overcome.

Nor will I go into the vexed question of numbers. There can be no agreement upon those actually employed, nor can a military pundit prescribe what odds should be necessary to conduct a successful invasion of a hostile country. An army on the defensive at home needs little service of supply and almost no service of security. An invader must have great trains, detachments to guard them, and heavy outposts not available for battle. As we saw in France, even an allied army needs several times as many uniformed men to support its combat-forces as the native army requires. An invading army needs many more. Grant had numbers enough to win, but these numbers were too few for McDowell, McClellan, Halleck, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, and Meade.

Nor will I rehash the controversies over losses—the inevitable punishment of people who resort to war. Criticism of Grant for incurring heavy casualty lists in utterly destroying his adversary refutes itself.

It is far easier to compare leaders on the same side of a war with each other because we may measure them against the same opposition. By this test Grant towers above all his comrades. Sherman approached him in strategy but not in battle. Sheridan was his equal in conducting a fight but did not have a chance to display his genius in a larger field. Grant said of him:

As a soldier, as a commander of troops, as a man capable of doing all that is possible with any number of men, there is no man

living greater than Sheridan. He belongs to the very first rank of soldiers, not only of our country but of the world. I rank Sheridan with Napoleon and Frederick and the great commanders in history. No man ever had such a faculty of finding out things as Sheridan, of knowing all about the enemy. He was always the best-informed man in his command as to the enemy. Then he had that magnetic quality of swaying men which I wish I had—a rare quality in a general . . . a man whom I regarded then, as I regard him now, not only as one of the great soldiers of America, but as one of the greatest soldiers of the world, worthy to stand in the very highest rank.<sup>4</sup>

It has long been customary to catalogue and even to compare the famous generals of history. Any list of the world's greatest generals would include Alexander, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Hannibal, Cæsar, Marlborough, Wellington, and von Moltke. Of these, six were kings or emperors and therefore, in the psychology of Europe, entitled to adulation, almost worship, and subject to little or no criticism. Hannibal, Marlborough, Wellington, and von Moltke were dukes and princes, one step removed from kings, constellations to be contemplated, not criticized. For them, too, the large end of the telescope.

Military writers even more than others have exalted their masters, because (in Europe), until this generation, armies were the properties of the monarch, not of the nation. Did not Marshal McMahon betray France at Sedan for Napoleon III? The system has departed, but the literature remains. We must understand its idiosyncrasies to get a true perspective. Then, divested of their overtones, let us see how these royalists compare with the republican hero of America.

Six of them became commanders by accident of birth: Cæsar by political log-rolling; von Moltke, the favorite of

<sup>4</sup> Quoted from J. R. Young, *Around the World with General Grant*, II, 296-98,

a king, was without experience in war until his sixty-fourth year; Marlborough<sup>5</sup> and Napoleon<sup>6</sup> rose to power by methods not of their profession, and if it is only fair to judge them by the ethics of their day, they cannot attach a bar sinister to Grant's political origin; Wellington was always backed by family<sup>7</sup> and political influence much greater than the political influence invoked for Grant. None of them rose to command by demonstrated merit.

Alexander and Cæsar fought against opponents so inferior in arms and organization as to meet little resistance. Similar warfare has taken place in our time in India, the Sudan, the Sulu Archipelago, and Morocco.

Hannibal, Charles XII, and Napoleon were military gamblers. Each of them marched to complete catastrophe—Hannibal three times, Napoleon six! When favored by the fall of events, they won brilliant victories, but their victories were less decisive than their defeats. They took great risks from a pathological love of excitement. Grant took such risks and won such victories, but only as at Bruinsburg and Wauhatchie when the blunders of others left him no alternative.

Only von Moltke and Napoleon directed the course of more than one army at a time. The former never met a foe of equal strength, an able general, or a difficult obstacle of nature. The teachings of Marshal Foch have dimmed much of his aura. No one has yet risen to debunk Napoleon, but if ever a general made a more obvious and calamitous blunder than Napoleon did in conducting the Campaign of 1812, with his armies marching farther and farther apart to the extremes of Europe, history has failed to record it. Any American who compares this with Grant's masterly direc-

<sup>5</sup> John Churchill was the brother of a mistress of James II and was himself the lover of a mistress of Charles II.

<sup>6</sup> Napoleon received command of the Army of Italy as a wedding portion for marrying Josephine Beauharnais, the discarded mistress of Barras, head of the Directorate.

<sup>7</sup> Wellington was appointed commander of the troops in India as brother of the viceroy.

tion, "All armies will move toward a common center," will lose his inferiority complex, unabashed by the stare of Wolseley's monocle or the patronizing condescension of the *École Supérieure de la Guerre*.

The eight generals who commanded only single armies can be compared to Grant only in the campaigns when he had no greater charge upon him. None of them ever rose higher than Donelson, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, or Appomattox; none averaged better than Iuka and Corinth; nor was the least successful battle of any of them a complete victory like Shiloh—so similar to Waterloo, Wellington's masterpiece.

Napoleon has been accepted as the one immortal genius to whom others may be compared only to enhance his glory. But if dogma can be disregarded, the facts dispassionately viewed will show that Napoleon came to an army in every way superior to its opponents; the high technical training of the royal officers had not been lost in the revolution that freed the army from the bonds of Class and Schools. Great military characters were free to rise and to make use of military draftsmen, bookkeepers, and mathematicians, as general staff-officers. The rank and file were fired by a hope and ambition nonexistent in the royal forces. With such soldiers and such marshals—Massena, Soult, Davout, Ney, Victor, Desaix, Augereau, Vandamme, Berthier, Murat, Lannes, Grouchy—Napoleon moved almost at will among peoples who at first looked upon him as a deliverer.

When his army deteriorated from losses and from its change from an army of liberation to an army of conquest; when he did not find generals to replace those, produced by the Republic, who were grown old or killed; when the people in the war zone turned against him—he marched to catastrophe.

In the West Grant came to an army in embryo, opposed to another of the same caliber. Organization had to be improvised; leaders had to be found. In these equal fields he towered over friend and foe. He went East to find an army

bound up by mental and governmental red tape; he had to oppose a foe fired and freed by revolution. Against this handicap he mustered superior numbers and resources and forced his way to victory.

But the contrast lies here: Napoleon found a great army and great generals, and left neither. Grant found neither, and left both.

Let us glance at the generals Grant would have used in a future campaign if he had gone forth on a career of conquest: Sheridan, Sherman, Schofield, Logan, Terry, Ord, Wilson, Stanley, Merritt, Crook, Parke, Mower, A. J. Smith, Humphreys, Griffin, Grierson, Miles. It is a list equal to Napoleon's marshals in their best days.

Too long has Grant's reputation been belittled by literary and military social climbers. Let us leave him in the estimation of his contemporaries.

Longstreet, an eminent opponent, wrote:

The class next after us (1843) was destined to furnish the man who was to eclipse all,—to rise to the rank of general, an office made by Congress to honor his service; who became President of the United States, and for a second term; who received the salutations of all the powers of the world in his travels as a private citizen around the earth; of noble, generous heart, a lovable character, a valued friend,—Ulysses S. Grant. . . .

As the world continues to look at and study the grand combinations and strategy of General Grant, the higher will be his award as a great soldier. Confederates should be foremost in crediting him with all that his admirers so justly claim, and ask at the same time that his great adversary be measured by the same high standards.<sup>8</sup>

Scott, whose career included the Napoleonic era, called Grant "the greatest general."<sup>9</sup>

Sheridan wrote of his chief:

The assignment of General Grant to the command of the Union armies in the winter of 1863–64 gave presage of success from the

<sup>8</sup> James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, pp. 17, 630.

<sup>9</sup> J. G. Wilson, *General Grant*, p. 292.



start, for his eminent abilities had already been proved, and besides, he was a tower of strength to the Government, because he had the confidence of the people. They knew that henceforth systematic direction would be given to our armies in every section of the vast territory over which active operations were being prosecuted, and further, that this coherence, this harmony of plan, was the one thing needed to end the war, for in the three preceding years there had been illustrated most lamentable effects of the absence of system. From the moment he set our armies in motion simultaneously, in the spring of 1864, it could be seen that we should be victorious ultimately, for though on different lines we were checked now and then, yet we were harassing the Confederacy at so many vital points that plainly it must yield to our blows. Against Lee's army, the forefront of the Confederacy, Grant pitted himself; and it may be said that the Confederate commander was now, for the first time, overmatched, for against all his devices—the products of a mind fertile in defense—General Grant brought to bear not only the wealth of expedient which had hitherto distinguished him, but also an imperturbable tenacity, particularly in the Wilderness and on the march to the James, without which the almost insurmountable obstacles of that campaign could not have been overcome. During it and in the siege of Petersburg he met with many disappointments—on several occasions the shortcomings of generals, when at the point of success, leading to wretched failures. But so far as he was concerned, the only apparent effect of these discomfitures was to make him all the more determined to discharge successfully the stupendous trust committed to his care, and to bring into play the manifold resources of his well-ordered military mind. He guided every subordinate then, and in the last days of the rebellion, with a fund of common sense and superiority of intellect, which have left an impress so distinct as to exhibit his great personality. When his military history is analyzed after the lapse of years, it will show, even more clearly than now, that during these as well as in his previous campaigns he was the steadfast centre about and on which everything else turned.<sup>10</sup>

Sherman wrote:

Grant is the greatest soldier of our time if not all time . . . he fixes in his mind what is the true objective and abandons all minor

<sup>10</sup> *Personal Memoirs of Philip Henry Sheridan*, II, 202–04.

ones . . . he dismisses all possibility of defeat. He believes in himself and in victory. . . . If his plan goes wrong he is never disconcerted but promptly devises a new one and is sure to win in the end.<sup>11</sup>

And:

Each epoch creates its own agents, and General Grant more nearly than any other man impersonated the American character of 1861-65. He will stand, therefore, as the typical hero of the great Civil War.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman, Fighting Prophet*, p. 639.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from J. F. C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 94.

## APPENDIX

### CIVIL WAR BATTLES—GEOGRAPHICAL CHRONOLOGY

*The battles under Grant's command are shown in italic.*

WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI	DISTRICT OF THE TENNESSEE	DISTRICT OF THE CUMBERLAND	THE EAST	THE NAVY
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1861

			Fort Sumter, April 12-14	
			Philippi, W. Va., June 3	
			Big Bethel, June 10	
Booneville, Mo., June 17				
Carthage, Mo., July 5				
			Rich Moun- tain, July 11	
			Bull Run, July 21	
Dug Spring, Mo., Aug. 2				
Wilson's Creek, Mo., Aug. 10				
Lexington, Mo., Aug. 17-20				
			Summerville, W. Va., Aug. 26	
			Hatteras In- let, N. C., Aug. 28-29	
	<i>Grant at Pa- ducah, Ky., Sept. 6</i>			

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

DISTRICT  
OF THE  
TENNESSEE

DISTRICT  
OF THE  
CUMBERLAND

THE  
EAST

THE  
NAVY

1861

Ship Island,  
Miss., taken  
by navy,  
Sept. 17

Ball's Bluff,  
Va., Oct. 21

*Belmont, Mo.,  
Nov. 7*

Port Royal  
Entrance,  
S. C., Nov.  
7

Mason and  
Slidell  
taken  
aboard  
"San Ja-  
cinto" from  
Confed-  
erate ship  
"Trent,"  
Nov. 8

Ivy Moun-  
tain, Ky.,  
skirmish,  
Nov. 9

Rowlett's  
Station,  
skirmish,  
Dec. 17

Dranesville,  
Va., skir-  
mish, Dec.  
20

Sacramento,  
Ky., skir-  
mish, Dec.  
28

1862

Charleston,  
Mo., cavalry  
skirmish,  
Jan. 8

Mill Springs,  
Ky., Jan.  
19-20

WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI	DISTRICT OF THE TENNESSEE	DISTRICT OF THE CUMBERLAND	THE EAST	THE NAVY
----------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------	-------------

1862

*Fort Henry,*  
*Tenn., Feb.*  
*6*

*Commodore*  
*Foote at*  
*Henry,*  
*Tenn., Feb.*  
*6*

Roanoke  
Island,  
N. C., Feb.  
8

*Fort Donel-*  
*son, Feb.*  
*15*

*Fort Donel-*  
*son, Tenn.,*  
*Feb. 12-16*

Pea Ridge,  
Ark., March  
7

Hampton  
Roads, Va.,  
March 8

"Merrimac"  
vs. "Moni-  
tor," March  
9

New Madrid,  
Mo., March  
14

Island No. 10,  
siege begun  
March 15

Winchester,  
Va., March  
23

Yorktown,  
siege be-  
gun April  
5

*Shiloh*  
*Church,*  
*April 6-7*

Island No. 10  
surren-  
dered,  
April 8

*Commodore*  
*Foote at*  
*Island No.*  
*10, April 7*

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPIDISTRICT  
OF THE  
TENNESSEEDISTRICT  
OF THE  
CUMBERLANDTHE  
EASTTHE  
NAVY

1862

Fort Pul-  
aski, Ga.,  
April 10Farragut  
passes Fort  
Jackson  
and Fort  
St. Philip,  
La., April  
24Farragut  
takes New  
Orleans,  
April 25Bridgeport,  
Ala., taken  
by Union,  
April 29Williams-  
burg, Va.,  
May 4-5Norfolk, Va.,  
taken May  
10Hanover  
Court  
House, Va.,  
taken by  
Federals,  
May 27Halleck  
entered  
Corinth,  
May 30Fair Oaks  
(Seven  
Pines),  
June 1Harrison-  
burg, Va.,  
June 6Memphis,  
Tenn.,  
taken  
by fleet,  
June 6Cross Keys,  
Va., June 8

WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI	DISTRICT OF THE TENNESSEE	DISTRICT OF THE CUMBERLAND	THE EAST	THE NAVY
----------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------	-------------

1862

Port Republic,  
Va.,  
June 9

Gaines Mill,  
Va., June  
27

Chickahominy,  
June  
28

Savage  
Station,  
June 29

White Oak  
Swamp,  
June 30

Malvern Hill,  
July 1

Cedar Mountain,  
Va.,  
Aug. 9

Richmond,  
Ky., Aug.  
29-30

Groveton  
Va., Aug.  
29

Second Bull  
Run, Aug.  
30

Chantilly,  
Va., Sept. 1

Frederick  
City, Md.,  
Sept. 4-5

South Mountain,  
Sept.  
14

Harper's  
Ferry  
taken by  
Jackson,  
Sept. 15

Antietam,  
Md., Sept.  
16-17

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPIDISTRICT  
OF THE  
TENNESSEEDISTRICT  
OF THE  
CUMBERLANDTHE  
EASTTHE  
NAVY

1862

*Iuka, Miss.,  
Sept. 19-20*Shepherds-  
town, Va.,  
Stuart's  
raid, Oct. 1*Corinth,  
Miss., Oct.  
3-4*Perryville,  
Ky., Oct. 8Harrodsburg,  
Ky., Oct.  
10Lexington,  
Ky., skir-  
mish, Oct.  
17Marianna, Ark.,  
Nov. 7Hudsonville,  
Miss., Nov.  
8Cane Hill, Ark.,  
Nov. 28Prairie Grove,  
Ark., Dec. 7Fredericks-  
burg, Va.,  
Dec. 13Kinston,  
N. C.,  
Dec. 14*Forrest's raid,  
Dec. 16-31:  
Lexington,  
Dec. 18  
Jackson,  
Dec. 19  
Trenton,  
Dec. 20**Grant's Holly  
Springs  
base de-  
stroyed by  
Van Dorn,  
Dec. 20*



WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI	DISTRICT OF THE TENNESSEE	DISTRICT OF THE CUMBERLAND	THE EAST	THE NAVY
----------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------	-------------

1862

Yazoo expedition,  
starts,  
Dec. 25

*Chickasaw  
Bayou,  
Dec. 27-29*

*Parker's  
Cross  
Roads,  
Dec. 30*

Stone River,  
Tenn., Dec.  
31-Jan. 1

1863

*Arkansas Post,  
Jan. 11*

"Alabama"  
sank  
"Hatteras,"  
Jan. 11

Bayou Teche,  
La., Jan. 14

"Montauk"  
destroys  
Confed-  
erate  
"Nashville"  
in Ogeechee  
River, Ga.,  
Feb. 2

Thompson's  
Station,  
March 4-5

Mosley's raid  
on Fairfax  
Court  
House,  
March 8

Farragut ran  
Port Hud-  
son, La.,  
batteries,  
March 14

*Porter's Ya-  
zoo expedi-  
tion,  
March 15*

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPIDISTRICT  
OF THE  
TENNESSEEDISTRICT  
OF THE  
CUMBERLANDTHE  
EASTTHE  
NAVY

1863

*Steele's*  
*Bayou*  
*expedition,*  
*March 16-*  
*20*

*Steele's*  
*Bayou ex-*  
*pedition,*  
*March 16-*  
*20*

Vaught's  
 Hill, Tenn.,  
 March 20

Cluke's (Mor-  
 gan) raid,  
 March 22-  
 31:  
 Mt. Ster-  
 ling,  
 March 22  
 Danville,  
 March 24  
 Dutton's  
 Hill,  
 March 30

Forrest  
 raided  
 Brantwood  
 and  
 Franklin,  
 Tenn.,  
 March 25

Farragut ran  
 Grand  
 Gulf, Miss.,  
 batteries,  
 April 1

*Grierson's*  
*raid, La*  
*Grange,*  
*Tenn., to*  
*Baton*  
*Rouge, La.,*  
*April 17-*  
*May 2*

Suffolk, Va.,  
 April 12-  
 May 4

*Porter passed*  
*Vicksburg*  
*battery,*  
*April 16*

*Fort Gibson,*  
*May 1*

Chancellors-  
 ville,  
 May 1-4

WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI	DISTRICT OF THE TENNESSEE	DISTRICT OF THE CUMBERLAND	THE EAST	THE NAVY
----------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------	-------------

1863

*Raymond,*  
*Miss.,*  
*May 12*

*Grant occu-*  
*pies Jack-*  
*son, Miss.,*  
*May 14*

*Champion's*  
*Hill, May*  
*16*

*Big Black,*  
*May 17*

*Vicksburg,*  
*May 22*

*Port Hudson,*  
*May 27*

*Brandy Sta-*  
*tion, Va.,*  
*June 9*

*Winchester,*  
*Va., June*  
*14-15*

*Shelbyville,*  
*Bragg out-*  
*flanked,*  
*June 28*

*Gettysburg,*  
*July 1-4*

*Vicksburg*  
*surren-*  
*dered July*  
*4*

*Battle of*  
*Helena,*  
*July 4*

*Bragg out-*  
*flanked*  
*again at*  
*Tullahoma*  
*and re-*  
*treats to*  
*Chatta-*  
*nooga,*  
*July 7*

# ULYSSES S. GRANT

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

DISTRICT  
OF THE  
TENNESSEE

DISTRICT  
OF THE  
CUMBERLAND

THE  
EAST

THE  
NAVY

1863

*Port Hudson  
surrendered,  
July 9, in  
consequence  
of fall of  
Vicksburg*

Fort Wagner,  
S. C.,  
July 18

Chickamauga,  
Sept. 19-20

DIVISION  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

*Grant takes  
command  
of the cen-  
ter, Oct. 17*

*Battle of  
Wauhatchie,  
Oct.  
27*

*Sherman  
reaches  
Grant,  
Nov. 14*

*Chattanooga,  
Nov. 23-25*

Mine Run,  
Nov. 27-  
Dec. 1

*Knoxville,  
Dec. 4*

1864

*Meridian,  
Miss.,  
raided by  
Sherman,  
Feb. 14*

Olustee Fla.,  
Feb. 20

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPIDIVISION  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPITHE  
EASTTHE  
NAVY

1864

Richmond  
raid by  
Kilpatrick  
and Dahlgren, Feb.  
28-March 4

*Grant appointed  
commander-in-  
chief,  
March 9  
but not actually  
allowed to  
command  
west of the  
Mississippi*

Red River  
expedition,  
March 12

Navy starts  
with Banks  
on Red  
River ex-  
pedition,  
March 12

Banks' Red  
River ex-  
pedition  
takes Fort  
DeRussey,  
La., March  
14

Sabine Cross  
Roads  
April 8

Pleasant Hill,  
April 9

*Plymouth,  
N. C.,  
April 20*

*Battle of the "Sassacus"  
Wilderness, defeats  
May 5-6 Confed-*

*Bermuda  
Hundred  
taken by  
Butler,  
May 5*

erate "Al-  
bemarle,"  
May 5

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

DIVISION  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

THE  
EAST

THE  
NAVY

1864

SHERMAN

*Buzzard's*  
*Roost, Ga.,*  
*May 8*

*Spottsylvania*  
*Court*  
*House,*  
*May 10*

*Resaca, Ga.,*  
*May 13-15*

*Newmarket,*  
*Va., May 15*

*North Anna*  
*Battle,*  
*May 23-27*

*Dallas, Ga.,*  
*May 25-28*

*Cold Harbor,*  
*June 1-3*

*Petersburg,*  
*June 16-18*

"Kearsarge"  
sank the  
Confed-  
erate "Ala-  
bama,"  
June 19

*Kenesaw*  
*Mountain,*  
*Ga., June*  
*27*

*Marietta, Ga.,*  
*evacuated,*  
*July 1*

*Early's inva-*  
*sion of*  
*Maryland,*  
*July 9*

*Monocacy,*  
*Md., July*  
*9*

*Peach Tree*  
*Creek,*  
*July 20*

WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPIDIVISION  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPITHE  
EASTTHE  
NAVY

1864

*Atlanta, Ga.,  
July 22-28**Chambers-  
burg raid,  
July 30**Petersburg  
mine, July  
30**Farragut co-  
operates  
with army  
at Mobile,  
Alabama.  
Captures  
forts Gaines  
and Mor-  
gan, Aug. 5**Weldon, rail-  
road taken,  
Aug. 18**Reams Sta-  
tion, Aug.  
25**Jonesboro,  
Ga., Sept. 1**Winchester,  
Va., Sept.  
19**Fisher's Hill,  
Va., Sept.  
22**Cedar Creek,  
Va., Oct. 19**Hatcher's  
Run, Oct.  
27**March to the  
sea begun,  
Nov. 14**Franklin, Tenn.,  
Nov. 30**Fort McAllis-  
ter, Dec. 13*

THE  
WESTDIVISION  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPITHE  
EASTTHE  
NAVY

1864

*Nashville,  
Tenn., Dec.  
15-16**Savannah,  
Ga., occu-  
pied, Dec.  
22**Fort Fisher, Porter and  
attacked, fleet bom-  
Dec. 25 bard Fort  
Fisher,  
Dec. 24-25*

1865

*Schofield ar-  
rives at Alex-  
andria, Jan.  
31**Sherman  
starts  
north, Feb.  
1**Fort Fisher, Porter assists  
N. C. in capture  
taken, Jan. of Fort  
15 Fisher,  
Jan. 15**Columbia,  
S. C., sur-  
renders,  
Feb. 17**Hatcher's  
Run, Va.,  
Feb. 5**Sherman at  
Charleston,  
S. C., Feb.  
18**Schofield  
takes Wil-  
mington,  
N. C., Feb.  
22**Averysboro,  
N. C.,  
March 16*



WEST OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

DIVISION  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI

THE  
EAST

THE  
NAVY

1865

*Bentonville,  
N. C.,  
March 19*

*Fort Sted-  
man, Pe-  
tersburg,  
March 25*

*Dinwiddie  
Court  
House,  
March 31*

*Five Forks,  
April 1*

*Petersburg  
outer lines  
carried,  
April 1-2*

*Selma taken  
by Wilson,  
April 2*

*Richmond  
evacuated,  
April 2*

*Richmond  
and Peters-  
burg occu-  
pied by  
Federals,  
April 3*

*Lee surren-  
ders at Ap-  
pomattox  
Court  
House,  
April 9*

*Johnston sur-  
rendered to  
Sherman at  
Durham Sta-  
tion, April 26*



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